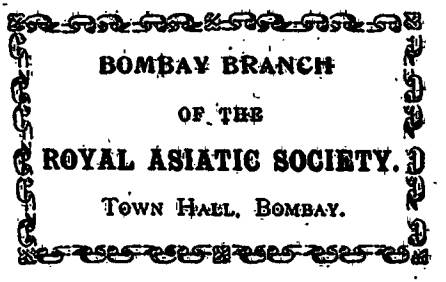
NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.





Digitized with financial assistance from
Government of Maharashtra
on 30 January, 2020

FRENCH AUTHORS AT HOME.

Episodes in the Lives and Works

OF

BALZAC—MADAME DE GIRARDIN—GEORGE SAND—
LAMARTINE—LÉON GOZLAN—LAMENNAIS—
VICTOR HUGO,

ETC.

64918

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"HEROES, PHILOSOPHERS, AND COURTIERS OF THE TIMES OF LOUIS XVI."

ETC.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
L. BOOTH, 307 REGENT STREET, W.
1864.

[*Right of Translation reserved.*]

843·7
Fre/F.c
64918



LONDON:
STRANGEWAYS AND WALDEN, PRINTERS,
28 Castle St. Leicester Sq.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VII.

MADAME DUDEVANT, GEORGE SAND, (*continued*).

The Morgue — Jules Sandeau — Delatouche — Apprenticeship to journalism — Portrait of Delatouche — Improvised essays — A double romance — Visit to Nohant — Balzac's guests — The Spell — Vigil of Fame — A critic's *billet doux* — Success — "Indiana" — "Lélia," &c. — Contemporary estimate of Balzac — Soliloquy of Sorrow — Real and Ideal — The Châtelaine at home — Household gods — Duality of Madame Dudevant and George Sand 1

CHAPTER VIII.

MADAME DE GIRARDIN — GEORGE SAND.

Conversation between Madame de Girardin and George Sand — Madame de Girardin's sorrow — Her dramatic success — Her maternal tenderness — Madame de Girardin's religious sentiment — The text of woman's life — The "tenth Muse" at home — Madame de Girardin's toilette — Her mode of life — Portraits of Madame de Girardin and George Sand — George Sand's children . . . 53

CHAPTER IX.

VICTOR HUGO.

Victor Hugo — Birth, parentage, education — First appearance before the Academy — Young Royalist poet — Royal *mot* on Victor Hugo — The mother — The bride — Critics — "Cromwell" — A fortune in a bottle of ink — Political progress — Lamennais — The priest and the poet — Rejection of Balzac by the Academy — Visit of Victor Hugo to Balzac — Léon Gozlan — Two

celebrities *en déshabille* — Walk and talk before breakfast — Balzac's walnut-tree — Conversation at Balzac's table — Balzac's home — Hugo's home — Hugo's anecdotes of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans — Literary *soirées* of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans — A royal rebuke — Balzac on the immortality of the pen — The Duc de Rohan 73

CHAPTER X.

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE.

Lamartine's birth — Father — Mother — Education — Travels — Adventures — Graziella — Return home — Mother's sympathy — Vocation and pension — Lamartine in Paris — Political wavering — Italy — Sword sheathed — Christianity — The Duc de Rohan — "*Méditations*" — Diplomacy — Marriage — Inheritance — Magnificence — Charity — Political ambition — Non-election — Travels in the East — Lady Hester Stanhope — Domestic sorrow — Political success — Lamennais — Eloquence — The Duchesse d'Orléans — Literary friendships — Literary soirées — Paris journalism 101

CHAPTER XI.

FÉLICITÉ DE LAMENNAIS.

Lamennais — His birth — Parentage — Education — George Sand — "Lélia" — Sainte Beuve — Buloz — "Revue des deux Mondes" — Michel de Bourges — "Vautrin" — Dramatic excitement — A packed *parterre* — Hisses *v.* claps — Theatrical wag — The "Vicomte de Launay" unsheathes the sword — "Lettre Parisienne" — Balzac's monetary schemes — "Vautrin" proscribed — Balzac's mysterious disappearances — His table-talk with George Sand — Victor Hugo and Mademoiselle Mars — Balzac's dramatic rehearsals — M. Harel, dramatic dictator — Balzac and Cooper the novelist — English girl's homage to Balzac . . . 141

CHAPTER XII.

LOUIS BLANC — GEORGE SAND — CHOPIN — SAINTE BEUVE — LAMARTINE — THÉOPHILE GAUTIER — M. ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN — MADAME ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN — VICTOR HUGO — BALZAC.

Louis Blanc — George Sand's home in Paris — Her children — Her guests — Her Retreat — George

Sand and Louis Blanc — Literary politicians — The horizon darkens — M. de Girardin on Socialism — Victor Hugo at the Tuileries — Peer and Poet — First rumours of "Les Misérables" — The Countess Von Hanska — "Séraphita" — "Seraphitus" — Memories — Sibyl of Auteuil — Revolution of 1848 — Lamartine and the Duchesse d'Orléans — Lamartine and Louis Blanc — The "Vicomte de Launay" on the Republic — M. de Girardin's arrest — Letters to his wife — Her conduct — Her address to Frenchmen — Work to the last — Farewell interview with George Sand — Lamartine — Balzac's death — Funeral — Éloge — Arabs — Last look at the Jardies — "Mercadet" — Creditors — Balzac's mode of writing — Fate — *Comédie humaine* — Fame . . . 199

CHAPTER VII.

MADAME DUDEVANT, GEORGE SAND, (*continued*).

Signs of the times—Jules Sandeau—Delatouche—Apprenticeship to journalism—Portrait of Delatouche—Improvised essays—A double romance—Visit to Nohant—Balzac's guests—Investiture of GEORGE SAND—Vigil of Fame—Critic's approbation—Generous sympathy of Genius—Success—"Indiana"—" Lélia," &c.—Contemporary estimate of Balzac—Soliloquy of Sorrow—Real and Ideal—The Châtelaine at home—Address to household gods—Duality of Madame Dudevant and George Sand.

It was at this time, when men's blood and women's tears were flowing, when the earth was yawning to receive the victims of an epidemic disease, and when Faith was obscured by clouds lurid with Revolution, that Aurore — Idealism incarnate, goaded by cruel facts into a new search for Destiny — again encountered Jules Sandeau. The atmosphere which now encompassed them was no longer that of the Vale of Berri, redolent with pious memories; but it was literally impregnated by the Morgue with death, and disease, and despair.

The nun, who we have seen conducting Aurore for the last time through the deserted cloisters of her convent, had predicted, when contemplating her guest and reflecting on the signs of the times, "Ça va mal;" and antecedents, as contained in the preceding chapter, may here be accepted by the reader in the place of an essay on Cause and Effect. We will, therefore, proceed. The Revolution was accomplished; liberalism was the watchword of France; liberty, her dream; but, in the midst of political emancipation, was Society more at peace with itself than before? Aurore may be accepted as a type of her time when thus she soliloquizes:—

"In the midst of fiery pleasures in which thou didst vainly seek a refuge, the mysterious Spirit came to reclaim thee

and to snatch thee from them. Never couldst thou forget the Divine emotions of thy first faith. From the midst of excitement and corruption didst thou return to that faith, and thy voice which was raised to blaspheme, burst out in spite of thyself into a chant of love and of enthusiasm. . . . A chant sublime, though fantastic; now cynical and unruly as an antique ode, now chaste and soft as the prayer of a child. Reclining upon roses which were earth-grown, thou didst dream of the roses of Eden, which fade not; and, breathing the ephemeral perfume of thy pleasures, thou didst speak of the eternal incense which is guarded by angels on the steps of the throne of God."

Jules Sandeau, described by his *confrère*—Théophile Gautier—as being at this

time a young man of distinguished manners, frank and witty, was not rich; and Aurore, whose fame was predestined to eclipse his own, was only too glad, in a pecuniary point of view, to be employed with him by M. Delatouche, the editor of "Figaro," as contributor to that journal. Delatouche was a native of Berri, and therefore his young countrywoman had a claim on his protection; although he warned her against the illusive nature of literature as a dream of gold, declaring to her that he, "notwithstanding the superiority of his beard," did not make by it, on an average, more than 1500 francs a-year. Upon this a conversation ensued, which may thus be paraphrased :—

"Well," continued Delatouche, turning to Aurore's companion, "what say you, Sandeau, to journalism? It is less difficult

than you may think. Work for the 'Figaro.'"

"Alas!" sighed Sandeau, "but I am too lazy for journalism."

"Pshaw!" cried Aurore, "if I could only earn the sum just named, I should esteem myself so rich as to ask nothing more of gods nor men, — not even a beard."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Delatouche, "work, and let me see what can be done, with and without the beard."

Henceforth, Madame Dudevant, under this master's paternal auspices, wrote systematically. As also did Sandeau, though he lacked her energy.

"But at first," explains Aurore, "like all beginners, I was very prone to imitate the style of others. . . . The 'Figaro' was a little journal sparkling with opposi-

tion and satire. At certain hours of the morning *we* (*i.e.* four or five apprentices, including Jules Sandeau and myself) sat at small tables round M. Delatouche, and tried to furnish him with what is called 'copy.' It was a very good study, frivolous as it may appear. It supplied us with a theme; it was requisite, during the sitting, to produce an article on the spur of the moment, but which had sense and style in it.

"Meanwhile, M. Delatouche occupied himself with everything; he amused himself in causing to spout forth round about him from the pens of his apprentices, *bons mots*, puns, and epigrams."

Unaccustomed, as yet, to take part in epigrammatic and impromptu talk, Aurore was so distracted by the *vivâ voce* wit encouraged by Delatouche amongst his *colla-*

borateurs, that sometimes he had, with tiger-like playfulness, to shake her by the collar of her coat into instant renewal of literary attempts, which, until thus enforced by him, had elsewhere met with much discouragement. To explain this, let her here speak for herself.

"When I came to Paris," says she, "a short time after the revolution of 1830, I had never worked but for my pleasure; I knew, like everybody, a little of everything, and nothing thoroughly. Indeed, I did not know my own language perfectly. Under these circumstances, considering how to employ my days, and to turn my good will to profit by some sort of work —wavering between flower-paintings upon fans and snuff-boxes, portraits at fifteen francs each, and literature — I wrote, between attempts at all these things, a

very bad romance, which never appeared. My paintings on wood required much time, and were less effective than the least smear of varnish. For five francs, portraits, much better likenesses than mine at fifteen francs, were everywhere to be had. I might, following the example of others, have taken lessons for the purpose of teaching many things that I did not know myself; but, turning at all risks towards literature, I went resolutely to ask advice of one of my countrymen.*

"In him (DELATOUCHE) I found a man forty-five years of age, and rather too fat—

* Previously, Aurore had sought direction from M. Kératry, a veteran in years as in letters, and lately married to a young wife, who, being mistaken for his daughter by Aurore, he revenged himself upon the latter by telling her, in words more coarse than courteous, that babies not books ought to be the objects of a woman's ambition.

whose countenance sparkled with wit, whose manners were exquisite, and whose language was choice. As though prepared, his conversation was ornate, and his diction pure.

"This intimacy was very precious for a literary aspirant. But I then restricted myself (during its first period) to listening to the brilliant babbling of my countryman, as to something strange, interesting, but so foreign to my faculties that to me it could only be but an unprofitable pleasure.

"By degrees, and in proportion as he criticised and condemned my first literary attempts *au cabinet*, I gradually became familiarized with reason, taste, and art, although they came forth to my view from beneath waves of merry mockery, of which, sharp and amusing, he was prodigal in his conversations with me.

"Nobody excelled him in destroying the illusions of self-love, but nobody had more good-nature and delicacy than he had in sustaining one's hope and courage.*

"He had a sweet and penetrating voice, an aristocratic and distinct pronunciation, an air at the same time bantering and soothing. His eye, wounded in his childhood, by no means disfigured him, and bore no other trace of accident than a sort of red fire which escaped from the pupil, and gave to it when he was ani-

* One of his countrymen (Delecluze) says:— "Delatouche was governed by two passions, literature and republicanism." Republicanism filters through all his writings, even through his romances. It is, therefore, scarcely to be wondered at, that during her literary studies under Delatouche, Madame George Sand received some first political impressions in favour of republicanism.

mated, I know not what fantastic splendour.

"M. Delatouche loved to teach, to chide, to indicate; but he wearied quickly of those who were foolishly vain, and turned his wit against them, in ironical compliments, the malice of which was indescribable. When he found a heart disposed to profit by his enlightenment, he became affectionate in satire. His tiger-like touch became paternal, his eye of fire grew tender; and, after having allowed the superabundance of his wit to overflow, he permitted you at last to see a heart that was sensitive and tender, full of devotedness and of generosity.

"Nevertheless, six months at least passed before I could appreciate his strength when demolishing my frail and feeble talent.

"I never defended myself, neither before him nor to myself, but my literary individuality was so little developed that I did not always very well know what he wished me to suppress, or what to enlarge in my style. I was irresolute, amazed, and I listened with that sort of peasant-like stupidity, which is not quick to comprehend, but which will end by being convinced.

"This numbness of my brain, this heaviness of my slow reflection, M. Delatouche generously and courageously did his best to enable me to conquer, but for a long time he lighted his fire with my abortive literary efforts.

"Incessantly did he tell me that ease is the writer's highest excellence. I felt and recognised the truth of this, but I could not attain to it.

"He was not discouraged; on the contrary, he said to me every day, 'I predict that you will end, or rather begin, by making a fine romance.'"

And at last he recommended Aurore to write one in conjunction with Jules Sandeau.

Together they set to work.

At Paris, and in company with Jules Sandeau, Madame Dudevant became acquainted with Balzac. This was just at the time when he was reaping the first profits of his "Peau de Chagrin," and during a brief season when, elated by those profits, he had assumed dandyism in his attire, and effeminacy in his abode. It was then that he carried that marvellous walking-stick already alluded to, and immortalised by his friend, Madame de Girardin. This walking-stick, which was

of unusual size, and enriched by precious stones, he even took with him to the Opera, and displayed it when there in front of the box where he sat.

"Was it really a *walking-stick?*" asks Madame de Girardin. "What an enormous walking-stick! To what giant does such a big walking-stick belong? A sort of club formed of turquoises, gold, and marvellous chisellings; and behind all that two large black eyes (the owner's) more brilliant than precious stones." It is M. de Balzac, the former chum of Delatouche, but now the object of his literary enmity, and of some personal jealousy.

In presence of this walking-stick, and those eyes, and that author,—the Master of Realism—did Aurore—the future Sibyl of Idealism,—now find herself. "Having sold his 'Shagreen Skin,'" she explains,

"Balzac despised his little lodging between two floors, and wished to leave it; but, upon reflection, he contented himself by transforming his small rooms (*chambres de poëte*) into an assemblage of boudoirs *à la Marquise;* and one fine day he invited us to come and partake of ices within his walls, which were hung with silk and bordered with lace. . . . Puerile and powerful, always envious of a *bibelot*, and never jealous of a glory; sincere to modesty, boasting to lies, confident in himself and in others, very expansive, very good, and very foolish, with an inward sanctuary of reason into which he retired that he might reign supreme in his work; cynical in chastity, drunk in drinking water, intemperate in work, and sober in all other passions, positive and romantic to equal excess, credulous and sceptical, full of

contrasts and of mysteries, such was Balzac, then still young. . . . I spoke very little of my literary projects to Balzac; he scarcely believed in them, and did not dream of examining if I were capable of something. I did not ask his advice; he might have told me that he kept it for himself, and this he would have said as much from the ingenuousness of modesty, as from the ingenuousness of egotism, for with agreeable surprise I have since found out that he had his way of being modest under the appearance of presumption; and as to his egotism, it also had its reactions of devotion and generosity.

"One evening, when in a strange manner we had dined with Balzac (I think that that dinner was composed of boiled beef, of a melon, and of champagne), he went to put on a fine new dressing-gown,

on purpose to show it to us, with all the pride of a young girl; and thus arrayed, and with a candlestick in his hand, he insisted on accompanying us as far as the railing of the Luxembourg. It was late, the place was deserted, and I observed to him that he might be assassinated on his way home.

"'Not at all,' said he, 'if I meet thieves they will take me for a madman, and they will be afraid of me: or for a prince, and they will respect me.'

"It was a fine calm night. He accompanied us thus, carrying his wax-candle alight in a pretty silver-gilt chiselled candlestick, and talking of four Arab horses which he had not then, which he would have soon, which he never has had, and which for some time he firmly believed to have. He would have reconducted us

to the other end of Paris had we allowed him to do so."

Aurore did not ask Balzac's advice, but when, afterwards, the first dawn of her genius was hailed in the literary hemisphere, he thus gave it :— "Idealize the beautiful; it is woman's work. You do well to turn aside from things which would give you nightmare. . . . You seek man such as he ought to be; I take him as I find him. These two roads lead to the same end. And even I, also, like exceptional beings; I am one of them."

With Madame de Girardin did Aurore also become acquainted in course of time; but, as we shall presently see Madame Dudevant in presence of " the tenth Muse," that acquaintance need not be enlarged on here.

At the end of a few weeks, the novel

which Delatouche had recommended Madame Dudevant and Jules Sandeau to write was finished. It was entitled, "Rose et Blanche, ou La Comédienne et la Religieuse."

Delatouche introduced it to the notice of an old publisher, and the young authors are said to have received four hundred francs for the manuscript.

This sum was wealth to them in those days. Jules Sandeau, a literary law student, received an allowance from his father, which was scarcely sufficient to support himself alone, and Madame Dudevant had, as we know, beggared herself. But each of these authors was afraid to put his or her name to the work. Aurore for fear, as she said, of a scandal; and M. Sandeau for fear, as he said, of his blood relations, upon whom he was dependent, and

who would oppose his romantic achievements if they knew of them. So, possibly by the recommendation of Delatouche, the name *Sandeau* was cut in half, and the title-page of "Rose et Blanche" was signed, JULES SAND.

But a few hundred francs are not inexhaustible, and Aurore was advised to obtain from her husband a *pension alimentaire*. Meanwhile, for reasons already alleged, she was compelled, at stipulated periods, to visit Nohant, by which necessity she was now, as woman, inevitably involved in some of the most painful phases of that experience which Delatouche declared to be essential to her as author. "Le roman," said he, "c'est la vie racontée avec art." "Let Destiny teach you, but try to remain a poet."

Her present visit to Nohant was one of

painful reflection, but during its seclusion she consoled herself by writing the greater part of the work ("Indiana"), the appearance of which was an epoch in the literature, if not in the society, of France.

It is possible that to this visit to the home of her childhood the fire and the pathos of that work are greatly due. The sense of outrage and injustice, long restrained, here bursts forth in a way to overwhelm and to set loose at once, and for ever, those marvellous faculties, which, up to this time, Madame Dudevant declares to have been numbed. In "Indiana" her genius emancipates itself, but she denies the personality of that work.

She had agreed with Jules Sandeau on the plan of this work before her departure from Paris, although they had not had much success in literary collaboration.

In the interval of her absence, Jules had been dreaming, and Aurore had been working.

She returned to Paris,—to her garret on the Quai St. Michel. Domestic experience had been painful, and the home attempt at pecuniary negotiation unsuccessful, but she brought back that with her which, by the new-born consciousness of genius, she felt would give her power and independence.

She stood before Jules Sandeau, her manuscript at her heart.

"Have you worked?" asked she of him.

"I have dreamed," answered he.

"Well," said she, laughing; "it is better to work than to dream. Look at what I have done." And then he first beheld the manuscript of "Indiana."

Jules rubbed his eyes, thinking he was still dreaming.

Aurore—as the story goes—thrust the manuscript into his hands.

"Read," said she, "and correct it."

Slowly, as though awaking out of sleep, Jules Sandeau did begin to read; and, presently, from time to time, he uttered cries of enthusiasm as he proceeded.

"But," at length he exclaimed, "there is no correction needed here. It is a *chef d'œuvre*."

"So much the better," she answered. "Let us take *our* work to the market."

"Nay," said he (possibly for more than one reason), "it is thine, and thine only."

Generously did Aurore desire to associate her former *collaborateur* in her future triumph. But the triumph had not

yet come, and he would not consent to this.

Endeavouring to persuade him to share her laurels, Aurore led Jules Sandeau into the presence of their friend and patron, Delatouche, whom she urged to act as umpire in this quarrel.

But Sandeau persisted in his refusal.

Delatouche would not read the manuscript of "Indiana;" it is possible, therefore, that the motive of Sandeau's refusal to associate himself in its publication was doubtful to him.

As an excuse for not reading that manuscript Delatouche said to Aurore,—

"I desire that you now try the strength of your own wing. I should fear to influence you, and, since this work has *come* to you, it must be launched without backward glances. Besides, you read badly,

and I cannot read a manuscript. I believe that I shall never be able to form a just judgment but of a book in print."

"I took things," says Madame Dudevant, who records this conversation with Delatouche, "very coolly. My end in view was to earn the necessaries of life, and to lose myself quickly in the crowd of people who are forgotten. The twelve hundred francs which the publisher gave me for this work were a fortune to me. I hoped that he would make one by his bargain, and that M. Delatouche would pardon my mediocre book in favour of my moderate ambition."

But, when the title-page of "Indiana" was sent to Aurore Dudevant in proof, its editorship again came under discussion, and the same dispute between her and Sandeau upon this point was again

referred to Delatouche, who was present.

"See, Monsieur," said Aurore, holding out the title-page towards him, "it is a sad fact that I know not by what name to sign myself."

"Upon that point," answered Delatouche, slyly, "I cannot but confess, my dear child, that you are in an awkward position. But stay; the first romance was signed *Jules Sand*, was it not?

"Yes—ah! yes," sighed she, who, in her convent, had been called *Sainte Aurore*.

"Well," continued Delatouche, "*Sand*, therefore, has become public property, so you have only to prefix another name for that of JULES. Here, by-the-bye, is an almanac. Let me see" (turning over the leaves) . . . "This is the day of Saint George. Of single combat! Of signal

conquest! Ah, by Saint George! . . Madame: CALL YOURSELF GEORGE SAND!"

Aurore herself was inclined to the Berrichon name of *George*, and she hoped that Jules and George would pass for brothers, or cousins.

"One evening," she further explains, "I was at home in my attic. The first copies of 'Indiana' had just arrived, and were lying on the table. M. Delatouche came in, and seeing the books, he seized hold of one with his usual vivacity, cut its first pages with his fingers, and began to jeer, as usual, crying, 'Ah! Pastiche! Copyist! Pastiche! What wilt thou with me? There,' tapping the book, 'is some Balzac, *si ça peut!*' And coming out with me on to the balcony which ran round the roof of the house, he said, and said over and over again, all the

sprightly and excellent things that he had often said before to me on the necessity of being one's self, and not imitating others. It seemed to me at first that he was unjust this time; but then, carried away by his words, I became of his opinion. He even told me that it was necessary for me to return to my water-colour paintings upon screens and snuff-boxes, which certainly were amusing to me. . . . but, unfortunately, I did not find a sale for them.

"My position became discouraging; but, nevertheless, be it that I had never nourished any hope of success, or be it that I was callous with the carelessness of youth, I did not vex myself concerning the decree of my judge, and I passed a very tranquil night. The next morning, on awaking, I received the following note

from Delatouche which I have ever since preserved:—

"'George! . . . I am at your feet. . . . Forget all the harsh things which for the last six months I have said to you. I have passed the night in reading you. . . . Oh, my child! how satisfied I am with you!'

"This was the first literary encouragement which I received, and I believe I may say it was the last which ever gave me pleasure. It sprang from a heart which did not easily surrender itself; which almost always guarded itself against access, but which expanded with great ingenuousness when the mysterious entrance to it had once been found.

"How happened it, then, that about a year after this, I lost the friendship of M.

Delatouche, and only found it again at the end of ten years!

"I had no cause for self-reproach, having failed neither in devotion nor gratitude towards him. I was ignorant of the motives of this disaffection until 1844, and when they were told to me by M. Delatouche himself, I was none the wiser.

"Troubled at heart, and delicate in constitution, he attached importance to motives which were so unmeaning as to be called imaginary. . . . M. Delatouche had a fund of grief from which for years past he had drawn forth bitterness. He adored children; he had had one—a boy, who, I have been told, was a prodigy of intelligence and of beauty. He had lost him; he had never consoled

himself for that loss. In his latest years he wrote to me:—

"'Ah! that I did but possess that adorable child, and that I might employ my life in giving him pleasure! I should ask nothing more.'

"M. Delatouche became a prey, when in the maturity of life, to a physical malady, and, his nerves shaken, his equilibrium destroyed, he no longer lived but to suffer bodily and mentally."

To this cause, also, may be assigned the disunion which had long since subsisted between Delatouche and Balzac.

In 1827 they had not only lived in the same house together, as we have seen, but, in the conversations and literary consultations which then, naturally, took place between them, Balzac may be said to have been, like George Sand, the pupil of

Delatouche. Nevertheless, "One day," says George Sand, "Balzac found himself, as I did, mortally embroiled with Delatouche without knowing why. They were never reconciled. But Delatouche had loved Balzac, and loved him still in hating him. He was sick and grief-worn. Balzac, well in health and cheerful, had no malice against him. He simply forgot Delatouche, who, incessantly fulminating against Balzac, showed that he forgot him not. He would have opened his arms to receive him, if Balzac had only willed it."

The friendship of George Sand consoled the latest days of her former patron and critic, Delatouche; he lived to call her his *cher camarade.* Her heart, warm to sympathise in his sorrows, her genius, quick to comprehend his intellect, she

passed many days that were soothing to him and to her during the last period of his life, in that delicious retreat of the Vallée-aux-Loups, where in these earlier times she is said to have spent some happy hours.

This friendship was appreciated by her as by him; they each knew the full value of friendship, for each had enemies.

"Thou, even thou also," said he to her.

Indeed, from the first appearance of GEORGE SAND in print, there arose a clamour of enthusiasm and reprobation, as regarded her work, and disputes as to the sex of the author.

Who was George Sand? What was "Indiana?"* These were the questions

* Indiana is a Creole, with Spanish blood in her veins. She is fragile in body, sensitive in mind. Her

most exciting to the public of Paris when this extraordinary book first made its appearance. Was the author man or woman?

mother is dead. Her father exacts absolute obedience from her. She is untaught, submissive, etherealized, suffering. Her cousin, Sir Ralph Brown, is her only instructor, her only companion. Ralph is ten years older than Indiana. His parents prefer an elder brother to him; but the elder brother dies; Ralph consequently inherits a large property; and, obediently to the will of his relatives, marries without love. His wife dies. Meanwhile Indiana has grown up, and is married, by the will of her father, to an elderly French colonel, named Baron Delmare, who is very rich. She goes with her husband to reside in France, and her cousin Ralph makes their house in the country his home. Ralph loves Indiana, but Indiana, sad and silent, is indifferent to him. Her husband is described as a brutal domestic tyrant. Her favourite companion is a beautiful Indian waiting-woman, named *Noun.*

Noun's lover is a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, who has never been heard of nor seen by her mistress. His name is Raymon de Ramière. M.

Some folks talked of *his* genius; others, of *her* personal experience; and M. Buloz,

Ramière one night is mistaken by M. Delmare for a robber, and is shot by him. Delmare discovers his mistake, causes the wounded man to be carried into his house, and Indiana nurses him. The love of Raymon is now transferred from the maid to her mistress. Noun discovers this, and drowns herself, leaving Indiana in ignorance of the cause of her fate. Too late Indiana becomes aware of the cause, and awakes to the fact that Raymon, for whom she had forfeited duty, position, conscience, and the world's esteem, is utterly unworthy of all the sacrifices she has made, and is still willing to make, for him. This waking is terrific. She is passionate, tender, self-sacrificing. He is callous, hypocritical, selfish. They part. Indiana's retribution is complete. Her life is death. But Ralph, in time, consoles her. The love which he has cherished for years becomes known to her at last; love sincere, intense, devoted as hers has been for another. It transforms him; it solaces her. The scenery, sometimes in the Isle of Bourbon and sometimes in France, is gloriously portrayed, but it is subservient to the stirring passions of which it is the fitting background.

proprietor of the "Révue des deux Mondes," soon engaged George Sand as a contributor.

To Sainte Beuve was George Sand welcome; and Jules Janin, that *bon garçon* who, although liking to talk more of his dogs than his writings, had become, as one of the chief critics, a literary prince of Paris, knew the secret of the authorship of "Indiana," and delighted in mystifying the public still further by his hints in the "Débats." Critics quarrelled amongst themselves about "Indiana." One critic is said to have killed himself, because, though he cut up the book, he knew that it would take the wind out of the sails of another book which he himself was about to publish. Everybody read "Indiana." Its success was rapid and complete. Its publisher was declared to have torn up the

original draft of agreement between himself and the author, and to say to her :—

"Madame, that agreement is cancelled by fame." But Madame denies this, although adding that she doubts not the publisher was capable of such an act if he had only thought of it.

George Sand was now no longer poor. George Sand was now no longer in want of employment. George Sand was reported even to have removed into a grand abode; but this, again, she declares to have been a false rumour, although it is true that she was a new centre of attraction, and that rival editors and publishers outbid each other for the fruits of her génius.

Soon after the publication of "Indiana" she produced "Valentine;" but "Lélia" and "Spiridion" (the latter written during

Southern wanderings) are most typical not only of the sublime, though still unsatisfied, aspirations of their author, but of the times when they first appeared. Their mournful tones and passionate revolt find an echo in Chopin's mysterious music; and to their vexed questions did politicians attempt an answer in Utopian theories.

George Sand had rapidly attained a rare summit of fame and ambition. Was she happy? Let those judge who read the following letter from her, the date of which is 1835:—

"It matters little to me to grow old; it matters much to me not to grow old, alone. But I have never met the being with whom I could desire to live and to die; or, if I have met him, an adverse fate has separated him from me. Listen to a story, and weep.

"Once upon a time there was a good artist whose name was Watelet, who was a better engraver than any man of his time.

"He loved Marguerite le Conte, and taught her to engrave as well as he did. She left her husband, her wealth, and her country, to go and live with Watelet.

"The world execrated them; then, as they were poor and humble, the world forgot them. Forty years afterwards, lived in the environs of Paris, in a little house that was called *Moulin-Joli*, an old man who engraved, and an old woman who, seated at the same table with him, pursued the same occupation.

"The first idle person who discovered this old couple, announced his discovery to others, and the fashionable world flocked in crowds to Moulin-Joli to see the phenomenon;—a love of forty years' duration,

a labour always assiduous and always liked; two fine twin talents; Philemon and Baucis, living in the time of Mesdames de Pompadour and Dubarry.

"This discovery was an event, and the miraculous couple had their flatterers, their friends, their admirers, their poets.

"Fortunately, the couple died of old age, a few days afterwards; fortunately, because the world would have spoilt everything.

"The last design engraven by them represented the Moulin-Joli, the house of Marguerite, with this device,—*Cur valle permutem Sabina divitias operosiores?*

"This engraving is framed, and hangs in my chamber above a portrait of whom nobody here has seen the original. During one year the being who left this portrait to me was seated with me every night at

a little table, and he lived by the same work as I did. At dawn of day, we consulted each other on our work, and we supped at the same little table, whilst chatting of art, of sentiment, and of the future. The future has broken its troth to us.

"Pray for me, O Marguerite le Conte!"

George Sand was accused of sapping society to its foundations. Was she or society itself the more to be blamed for this? That which she says upon this point with regard to the writings of Balzac may be applied with equal force to her own.

"If virtue succumb and if vice triumph, it is not that the sentiment of the book is doubtful; it is society which is condemned."

George Sand now knew Balzac, (*Dom*

Mar, as he signed himself to his friends) intimately. Her appreciation of the purity of life which he practised and preached does honour to her as to him; although, considering how she had lost her own anchorage in a dreary sea of sorrow, with its tides of bitter circumstance, it is somewhat pathetic that she should be the one to have more faith than others had in the real worth of this, her *confrère*, Balzac.

"In one thing only was he guilty of excess: work. Sober in all other respects, his morals were most pure; he almost always esteemed women solely according to the heart or the head. Even in his youth his life was, habitually, that of an anchorite, and although he may have written many harsh things, and although he may have passed for an expert in matters of gallantry, judged by his 'Phy-

siologie du Mariage,' and the 'Contes Drolatiques,' he was less *Rabelaisien* than *Bénédictin* . . . . When he met a healthy mind in a healthy body (I repeat his language) he found himself happy as a child, to be able to speak of true love, and to elevate himself into the high regions of sentiment . . . . This great anatomist of life allowed it to be seen that he had learnt everything, good and evil; but this only by observation of the fact or by contemplation of the idea; in nowise from experience." Then, proceeding to show how Balzac, by the universality and impartiality of his genius, saw the good and the evil in all things he depicted, George Sand adds:—

"With voluptuousness has he depicted the seductions of vice, and with vigour has he shown its contagious hideousness."

"Again, if he discovered in you the *hypocrisy of the beautiful*, as he said one day before me, he wrangled with exuberant strength and spirit to prove to you that the beautiful does not anywhere exist. But, in presence of a saddened conviction, or if met by a heartfelt reproach, all his diabolical power was shaken down by the strength of the natural and good instinct which was at the root of himself. He would squeeze your hand, hold his tongue, reflect for an instant, and speak of something else."

In time, when her son was twelve years of age, George Sand, by a legal process (which, on her side, was conducted by the Socialist advocate, Michel de Bourges, whose mind was impressed by "Lélia"), regained possession of her estate of Nohant, and was constituted the sole guardian of

her children, to whom, as in their infancy, she was still passionately devoted.

In the course of this action, many sources of domestic sorrow and tyrannical circumstances which could not but affect her whole life as woman, were exposed to view; but she still protests against her having given premature publicity to these in "Indiana;" nevertheless, in the preface to that work, she says, speaking of the caprices of destiny, "The author is but a mirror which reflects these, and has nothing to apologize for if the reflection be faithful."

Madame Dudevant had left Nohant poor, unknown, friendless; a fugitive from much trouble which that heritage had entailed on her. Madame Dudevant returned to Nohant rich, celebrated, flattered, triumphant; seeking a retreat from the

world, and from the sad memories it had entailed on her; for she had quaffed pleasure, and its dregs were bitter to her; she had known love, but, "in the cup of love, she had drunk but tears."

She enters Nohant, she sees her home unchanged. And she?

"O my household gods!" she cries, looking around her at each well-remembered object; "you are there, such as I left you! I bow myself before you with that reverence which each year of age only deepens in the heart. . . . Perishable idols, who have seen pass by at your feet the cradles of my forefathers, of myself, and of my children; you who have seen pass out the coffins of those who have gone hence, and who will see that of those who will go hence, Salutation, O protectors! Ye, before whom my childhood tremblingly

prostrated itself; — Gods! Friends; upon whom I have called with tears from afar, from the bosom of stormy passions! That which I experience in seeing you again is very sweet and very terrible. Why did I leave you, — you who are always propitious to simple hearts, — you who watch over little children when mothers sleep, — you who cause the dreams of pure love to hover over the couch of young girls, — you who give to old folks sleep and health!

"Do you know me again, peaceful household gods? This pilgrim, who has arrived on foot through the dust of the road, and in the mist of the evening, do you not take her for a stranger?"

In answer to this address, — this ode or prayer, — the household gods seemed to take the sorrow-stricken but gifted pilgrim beneath their peculiar protection. Or,

rather, the little children, in this case as in many, unconsciously became household guardian angels. They never left her. In their society George Sand gradually repudiated in her writings some doctrines of revolt and despair to which her bruised heart had formerly given utterance. The liberty and the fire of genius were still hers; but, as she looked up from her work, with the pen which to her is a sceptre in her hand, the faces of her children smiled upon her, and in return she has taught some fellow-creatures to look up to heaven with hope.

Madame Dudevant, standing robed in white, beneath the trees which sheltered her earliest youth, and with her children by her side, is scarcely recognizable as George Sand, walking alone through the streets of Paris in male costume, a cane

in her hand, and a cigarette in her mouth.

Various are the anecdotes told by herself and others of odd episodes which have arisen in her life on account of its duality. Once, for example, when passing through Marseilles, she was invited to dine by an old physician named Cauvières, who borrowed a house of a friend named Falke, the more suitably to entertain his distinguished guest, George Sand. She went to this dinner in female attire. Presently, after the company was assembled, M. Falke came in; he looked round, but recognized no George Sand. Having lent his house for this entertainment in honour of the great author, M. Falke, during dinner, could scarcely restrain his wrath against M. Cauvières for having tricked and dis-

appointed him; and at dessert he grumbled aloud :—

"Ah, bah! you promised to show me George Sand, but I don't see *him* here."

M. Cauvières, in much perplexity at this outburst, indicated the place where sat the author of "Indiana." It was now M. Falke's turn to become embarrassed. He rose from his seat, and, bowing low :—

"Pardon, Madame!" he cried. "In truth I could never have recognized you; for I did not know before that a lady could be a man of letters."

Having thus far travelled with this illustrious author in her journey through life, we now—in her company—again find ourselves face to face with some of her contemporaries, who have already been introduced to the reader.

CHAPTER VIII.

MADAME DE GIRARDIN — GEORGE SAND.

Conversation between Madame de Girardin and George Sand — Madame de Girardin's sorrow — Her dramatic success — Her maternal tenderness — Madame de Girardin's religious sentiment — The text of woman's life — The "tenth Muse" at home — Madame de Girardin's toilette — Her mode of life — Portraits of Madame de Girardin and George Sand — George Sand's children.

MADAME ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN was childless. Once, in the year 1832, she had a hope of becoming a mother, but that hope was not realised; and henceforth, her heart yearned despondingly towards a blessing which was denied to her. This, to her, was the source of much sorrow.

"Ah!" she cried, addressing herself one day to Madame George Sand, "with joy would I have sacrificed the world, to have been a mother, as you are."

"That which you deplore as a mis-

fortune," answered George, "is a logical consequence of your superiority over other women. You have a mission; had you been a mother, three quarters of your life would have been lost to that mission. You are a queen of society and an author; family ties must necessarily have severed you, either from the vocation in which you excel, or have withdrawn you from the circle in which you reign supreme."

But "the tenth Muse" sighed, and said, "The world has served only to divert me from my solitude."

"And what I said to her," George Sand assures us, "I really thought. Looking upon that illustrious woman, I could not suppose that she ought to have been anything but what she was: beautiful, rich, free from too intense care, brilliant, and surrounded by admirers. But, never-

theless, she grieved despondingly, because she was too complete in herself not to suffer from anything that was incomplete. And yet, even without maternal duties, she often deplored the fact that her time and her liberty were too much infringed upon. She often desired solitude, wherein to meditate upon life without and life within her; and this solitude she could not enjoy."

Madame de Girardin's success as a dramatist was complete. Her plays are amongst the choice gems of the French language, and are chief amongst the popular favourites in the theatrical repertory her country.

But this unsatisfied love for little children displays itself in various passages in these plays; no character does this childless woman of heart depict more

touchingly than the mother's character; often has the audience of a Paris theatre been melted by the pathos with which she has given utterance to a mother's hopes, to a mother's fears, to a mother's despair. Not only have women, mothers themselves, sobbed during the representations of these passages in Madame de Girardin's plays, but men, who are fathers, have been unable to restrain their tears.*

The mendacious character of common rumour has passed into a proverb not confined to Paris; but, even if right there for once at random, only imagination can

* To her love for children, Lamartine also thus bears witness:—

"Her excess of *esprit* by no means robbed her heart of its tenderness. . . . I remember to have seen her one morning after a sleepless night, through which she had watched by the cradle of a sick child

follow the editor of the "Presse" beyond the portal by which one day he entered the presence of "the tenth Muse," leading a child who was almost too young to walk! Genius is usually generous, and it is there-

of her sister, the Countess O'Donnel.* All the heart of a mother was legible in her pale features. It was upon that occasion that I addressed some verses to her.

"Et je dis en moi-même: O! périsse la lyre!
De la gloire à son cœur le calice est amer!
Le génie est une âme: on l'oublie, on l'admire;
Elle savait aimer!

"L'étoile de la gloire, astre du sombre augure,
Semblable à l'insensé qui secoue un flambeau,
Eblouissant nos jours, les pousse à l'aventure
Vers un brillant tombeau.

* Madame Sophie Gay was the mother of four children besides Delphine. Of these one at this time was Madame O'Donnel, and another was Madame de Canclos. A third daughter, after being educated in England, had returned to France to found a *pensionnat* there; and a son had died in Algeria. Delphine (Madame de Girardin) was the youngest.

fore possible that when this baby boy toddled towards Madame de Girardin, and peered up into her face as she sat gazing into his eyes, that she saw something in those eyes which pleaded to her heart; and, if so, it is not surprising that she drew the child towards her, and turning to her husband, said,—

"I thank you for placing confidence in me; I will be as a mother to this little one."

Madame de Girardin, at all events, showed maternal aptitude, as those testify

"L'étoile de la femme est la pâle lumière
Qui se cache le jour dans l'azur étoilé,
Monde mystérieux que seule à la paupière
La nuit a révélé!

"Pour moi, quand la mémoire évoque ton image
Je te vois, l'œil éteint par la veille et les pleurs,
Sans couronne et sans lyre, et penchant ton visage
Sur un lit de douleurs!"

who remember first a daintily cared-for child, and afterwards a highly-cultivated youth, who regarded her reverently as—clad usually in black velvet — she moved amongst the guests which her genius summoned around her.

Madame de Girardin's self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of others may be regarded partly as a consequence of her religious sentiment, whilst George Sand's love for her children (Maurice and Solange) may be hailed as the stimulant to religious sentiment, which, in spite of herself, continually forces an utterance for itself in her writings. Long "tormented by things divine," her soul, like Chopin's music, strove to find harmony in discord; and, even as the Lélia of democracy, she dreamed of social and theocratic regeneration.

Later in these pages we shall find George Sand's confession of faith. Meanwhile:—

"Ah!" exclaims Madame de Girardin, "how generous is that religion which makes a hope to us of sacrifice; which shows us after the night, and even because of the night, a fine day; which promises to us happiness as a consequence of tears; which from a misfortune elicits a triumph, and which says to us, 'To suffer is to deserve.'"

And Balzac says, when portraying faith in heaven as an element essential to the endurance of life—and especially of woman's life,—"she initiated herself to her destiny. To feel, to love, to suffer, to devote herself, will always be the text of woman's life."

Madame Émile de Girardin now lived at Chaillot. In that then Elysian spot, her husband had bought a house, which house had been built under the empire in the form of a Greek temple. Still a Paris journalist, the former *improvisatrice* here worked hard, but was ever ready to lay down her pen, (which looked too dainty for the "Vicomte de Launay,") and to converse. Seated at her desk, with flowing hair and loose robes, she still looked more like the Sappho of France than the "Courrier of Paris."

The most illustrious men and women in Europe gladly flocked to visit her. An air of great elegance pervaded herself and her abode.

She seldom passed the threshold of her home. Contemplative and retired by nature and by habit, the "tenth Muse," as

she was still called by her countrymen, was only to be found if sought beneath her own roof. Although a politician, she was none the less a woman; her toilette was of a "*coquetterie délicieuse.*" In the summer time she sometimes sheltered herself from the light and the heat in an Algerian tent in her garden; at such moments of leisure,—when in the society of those of whose real worth she was least sceptical,—the inspiration of her earlier years returned in all its freshness. She was then no longer the "Courrier," the woman of the world, the woman who wrote prose, or even the sparkling, dashing "Vicomte de Launay," but she was Delphine Gay once more,—Delphine Gay, the marvel of beauty and of genius, who was crowned in the Capitol of Rome.

The fire of her genius renewed her youth, and at such moments it seemed as though time and its trials had only served to increase her personal loveliness, and to deepen that charm which her friend Balzac declares to be the chief charm —*expression*. The expression of Delphine's face could no more be caught in all its variety by the painter's art than could clouds ever changing and bewildering the beholder's mind with fresh combinations; but it may be guessed at by those who have stood before the portrait of Madame de Girardin.

There she sits in repose; the long fair hair drooping on her shoulders seems but to require a breath, or a turn of her small, classically shaped head, as she turned it towards Balzac when in animated conversation with him, to set it

floating in all its sunshiny splendour and luxuriance; her full soft eyes, gazing as at something unseen to common mortals, seem to need but the certainty of sympathy for the exquisitely moulded lips to give utterance to the thought which entrances her; to the thought which is enthroned on her forehead, which is pencilled in her delicately arched brows, and which, in solitude, causes her to lean, as though half wearily, the left cheek of her pale oval face on her left hand, thus, unconsciously, revealing an arm perfect in form as that of an antique statue.

In singular contrast to Madame de Girardin, thus contemplative, is the portrait of Madame George Sand at this period, when she possessed the power of rousing the Muse from her meditations Not in male costume stands George Sand

whilst uttering words of womanly consolation, but in a robe which, closely fitting about the bust and arms, displays, although buttoned up to the throat, the vigour of its wearer, notwithstanding the beauty of rounded and feminine proportions. Her dark hair, which once was wont to fall on her coat-collar, is now banded back from the forehead, although a curl here and there escapes, impatient of restraint. The eyes, large, luminous, and overarched by marked eyebrows, gleam with the fire of genius and energy, — which energy, though tempered by the fulness of the upper eyelid, softly drooping for the moment, is in harmony with the open forehead, with the well-formed nose, with the clearly defined nostrils, and with the rather massively rounded chin: with the *pose* of the figure, also; for in this

portrait George Sand stands with her right hand on her hip, an attitude which gives her an appearance of Amazon erectness. But, at the corners of the mouth, lurk playfulness and gentleness. The genius of George Sand is of Proteus-like power, and few perhaps, therefore, see her face — its index — alike. But who can doubt its occasional look of tender commiseration when, as woman, her heart is touched,—as it was by sympathy with Madame de Girardin? George Sand, the author, sought, in words already quoted, to console her sister of the pen; but none could feel more than did George Sand the mother, for a desolation which she measured by contrast with her own lot.

One summer, as she was travelling in company with her children, her sense of

blessedness in them found utterance. Writing to a friend of the "Malgache" (the latter could scarcely identify his former pupil and once domesticated *protegée* as the "Lélia" to whose power he bowed) she says of her daughter:—

"It is impossible to imagine the perpendicular bearing and the pride of this eight-year-old beauty at liberty amongst the mountains. The freshness of Solange defies the dry wind and the sun. Her chemise, thrown open, exposes to view her strong chest, the whiteness of which nothing can sully. Her long fair hair floats in light curls down to her vigorous and flexible loins, which feel no fatigue. . . . . Always serious and intrepid, her cheek glows with pride and displeasure when anybody seeks to aid her in her way up or alongside of

the mountains and precipices. Robust as a cedar of the mountains, and fresh as a flower of the valleys, she seems to know that she is destined by moral force some day to govern those whose physical force protects her now.

"At the Glacier des Boissons, she said to me:—

"'Be calm, my George, when I shall be queen, I will give all Mont Blanc to thee.'

"Her brother, who is her elder, is less vigorous and less rash. Tender and gentle, he recognises and instinctively reveres the superiority of his sister, but he likewise knows well that his goodness is a treasure to me. 'She will make thee proud,' says he often to me, 'but I will make thee happy.'"

And another author in France at this

time found repose from his labours, and a shelter from the conflicts of his literary life, in the society of childhood; that author, who was intensely appreciated by Madame de Girardin, and whose Pegasus was said by Madame Sand to be a dragon of fire,—VICTOR HUGO.

CHAPTER IX.

VICTOR HUGO.

Victor Hugo — Birth, parentage, education — First appearance before the Academy—Young Royalist poet—Royal *mot* on Victor Hugo—The mother and the bride — A guardian angel — Critics — "Cromwell" — A fortune in a bottle of ink — Political progress — Lamennais — The priest and the poet — Rejection of Balzac by the Academy — Visit of Victor Hugo to Balzac — Léon Gozlan — Two celebrities *en déshabille* — Walk and talk before breakfast — Balzac's municipal walnut-tree — Conversation at Balzac's table — Interior of Balzac's home — Interior of Hugo's home — Hugo's anecdotes of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans — Literary *soirées* of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans — A royal rebuke — Balzac on the immortality of the pen.

VICTOR MARIE HUGO (a weak infant, and subsequently thoughtful child) was born at Besançon in 1802. He is descended from a brave family of Lorraine, which can trace its descent for three centuries; though, as elsewhere said, an original author has no need of ancestors.

His father was a notoriously distinguished officer in the service of Joseph Buonaparte. The young Victor usually lived under the protection of his mother in Paris during his earliest years, but, at five

years of age, he went with her and his two elder brothers to Italy; and, in 1811, he again left France for Spain. To Southern scenes, and palaces, and skies, therefore, are some of his first impressions due.

When he was less than fifteen years of age, his poetical talent was so far developed, that he competed (after several what he calls *bêtises avant ma naissance*), for an Academical prize; but, though his name was honourably mentioned by the judges, he failed to get the prize on account of his extreme youth, his age being inscribed on the essay submitted to them. The wise men of the French Academy seem to have been in doubt whether indeed they were not being hoaxed; for, in granting "honourable mention" to this essay (the title of

which was, "Happiness to be derived from study in every vicissitude of Life"), it was endorsed by them with the words: "*If*, truly, the author be only of the age he states," &c.*

But years after this time, when Victor

* When Victor Hugo thus first competed for Academical honours, he was a school-boy, and the fate which, under scholastic discipline, had attended his early attempts at poetry, was not unlike that which, as we have already seen, had overwhelmed Balzac under similar circumstances. The repository in which the suspected boy-poet, Hugo, had stored away the treasures of his muse, was broken open by command of the pedagogue, who, addressing the young culprit, exclaimed in angry tones, whilst exhibiting his MSS. before his eyes: "Sir, I had forbidden you to make verses."

"But I, sir," answered the pupil, "had not given you leave to pick my locks."

A violent argument ensued as to the comparative crimes of making verses and of picking locks, and it was only by the remembrance of his own self-interest

Hugo (who had imbibed Royalist principles from his mother), having composed an ode on the coronation of Charles X., was called upon to present a copy of his verses to that monarch, Chateaubriand is said to have repeated to the king the words of his

on the part of the schoolmaster, that the poet escaped expulsion from the school. But, to a vulgar appreciation, success is sanctification; and when the schoolmaster found that *his* scholar had, as above mentioned, gained "honourable mention" from the Academy, he congratulated not only Victor but himself for possessing such a pupil.

Meanwhile, Victor, eager to convince the Academy of the truth of his alleged age, enclosed to the secretary of that learned and august body—the certificate of his birth. The secretary replied by an epistle, more courteous and complimentary than correct in orthography; but when Victor, in showing this letter, pointed out the eccentricity of its spelling to his teacher, that luminary was too dazzled by his own glory in having a pupil worthy to receive such a letter at all to recognise any defect concerning it.

Majesty's predecessor, "This poet is a sublime child!" But long ago the sublime child had said, "I will be a Chateaubriand or nothing."

At nineteen years of age Victor Hugo lost his mother, to whom he was devotedly attached. She was a tender mother, although somewhat of a "*Voltairienne*," and her memory is still held sacred by her son.

His life would have been desolate after her death, but for one love; which, growing with his growth, had long been the strength of his life; and which now—giving him power to endure privations—was his shield against the seductions of the world. At twenty years of age he married; and—looking at her in later years—none can doubt that Adèle Foucher was of youth extreme when she became Victor Hugo's bride.

During the first period of their union, this young couple, whose parents had long been acquainted, lived in comparative retirement, but their home was a practical poem in favour of early marriage. Children were born to them, and their happiness was complete. The father, by his genius, soon became celebrated; he grew rich; he gathered round him men who were illustrious in art and letters. The young wife was a guardian angel on the ladder of her husband's fame, as previously she had been over the steps of his youth; which—thus protected—was so unsullied, that when, according to Catholic custom, he made his confession before marriage, the only penance required of him was a chat with Lamennais, his confessor.

Lamennais, — then still a recognised father of the Church, — ardent in faith; precipitate in politics; small in stature; mighty in eloquence; restless in movement; his large eyes fiery with genius; his small mouth smiling like a child's; his immense nose like that of an evil mask.

But, to return to Victor Hugo. His name soon was of European celebrity, and, gradually, the Royalist odes of his early years gave place to dramas which were tinged by the dawn of Republicanism. The appearance of Hugo's "Cromwell" was the signal at which the press began to fulminate. But his enemies could not prevail against him, although, for a time, it seemed as though his strength, which had hitherto been cradled by good fortune, was to be tried by successive ordeals. Ob-

stacle after obstacle arose which he successively surmounted, and with each triumph over adverse circumstances, his power as author increased. In the bosom of his family, as before said, Victor Hugo found peace.

At length appeared "Notre Dame de Paris," which work, having been long premeditated by its author, was written by him in less than six months, and proves, as he himself says,—"Ce qu'il y a dans une bouteille d'encre;" for, determined, during that inspired period, to live only in the realms of romance, a new bottle of ink did Hugo buy; and, having uncorked it, he locked up his clothes, and shut out his *convives* (admitting critics only) and then, attired in a 'bearskin,' as a protection against chilly

nights and cold days—he lived, as we have seen Balzac live, in the characters and amongst the scenes he depicted; lying down but to dream, and rising but to dream. And the end of the dream was to find that, out of the bottle of ink—drained to its last drop—was distilled a *chef d'œuvre* for all time.

In the preceding year (1830), Victor Hugo, as poet and politician, had been absorbed; it was not, therefore, until after the Revolution that he could thus seclude himself from the outer world.

"But," says he, "in chanting the victory of the people, I had uttered a cry" (poetical) "of sympathy and consolation for the fallen king." Indeed this bard of progress, who had celebrated the death of the Duc de Berri, and the coronation of Charles X.,

now declares that, in espousing the cause of Louis Philippe, he regarded it merely as a means to an end,—that end being the Republic. But "the Republic," said he, "is not yet ripe." Lamennais was still Hugo's spiritual director; but, from the first, confessions had lapsed into *causeries*; and the democrat priest now waxed impatient at the poet's theory of temporising expediency. "I knew," said Lamennais to his disciple, "that you could not remain Royalist, but *I* place the republic in the present, and *you* foretell it in the future." The political convictions of Lamennais had deepened and darkened; and he now began to give utterance to predictions at which kings shuddered; but which, declared in the Words of a Believer, exercised a commanding influence over the

youth of France. In after pages we shall see more of this prophet, but here we follow the career of Victor Hugo.

He had no time for that rest requisite for men of less power; but now, as a new Master of the Drama, he discarded useless and time-worn conventions, and made the stage a mirror of real life; wherein men and women beheld their own passions, their own sins, and tears.

At a later date, he went to visit Balzac at the Jardies; and Balzac, who has already dazzled us by his visions of gold, was amazed by the wealth which accrued to Victor Hugo from the theatres of Paris. Balzac, his rival in celebrity as a novelist, was always in debt, as we know; and because (it is said) of his poverty, the Academy had refused to admit him as one

of its members; whereupon Balzac said:—"The Academy rejects my honourable poverty; it shall at a future period be forced to dispense with my wealth."

Victor Hugo, ultimately glorified as one of its members, had also, as we have seen, had his grievance against the Academy; but it was impossible either for a mutual grievance or a rival fame to enhance or to diminish the esteem with which Balzac regarded his gifted *confrère*.

"With eager delight," says Léon Gozlan, who was present, "did Balzac await the arrival of Hugo at the Jardies, on the morning of the day when, as before said, he went to visit him there.* It was rather

* LÉON GOZLAN, thus present at the Jardies, was born at Marseilles in 1806. His father, a Marseillais merchant, sent him at seventeen years of age to Algeria, in charge of a cargo of champagne wine.

later than had been expected when Victor Hugo arrived. Balzac," declares the wit-

The bottles burst, and Léon, penniless, and afraid perhaps, to face his father by returning to tell of his misfortune, joined a band of "coasters" (pirates?) in exploring the coasts of Africa. His travels extending, he encountered, in tropical, and comparatively unknown, regions, adventures worthy of Gulliver himself; and his subsequent abhorrence of the African race laid him open to an unjust suspicion of slave-dealing. Returning to Marseilles he set up as teacher, declaring that he "taught to learn!" In childhood he had been taught Arabic and Greek by a French professor, (who, having never left France, failed to make his pupil intelligible either to Greeks or Arabs;) and in 1828, he arrived in Paris with a bundle of poems which nobody read but himself. Soon, however, he distinguished himself as a journalist, and afterwards became known as the author of various novels which had their day of popularity. He was also successful as a dramatist, and thus became a celebrity of Paris. In society he was remarkable for his bronze complexion and ready wit. Of Balzac he regarded himself as the disciple.

ness of this interview, "was on thorns. His anxiety would not permit him to remain an instant in one place. He kept walking from the terrace to the gate, and from the gate to the terrace, and several times he sent to see if anybody had not appeared in the little lane beyond the gate. At last the gate-bell tingled; it was Victor Hugo.

"Balzac, recovering his serenity, ran forward to meet him, and thanked him in terms full of courtesy, for the special honour thus conferred on his humble and rural abode.

"There was much cordial pressure of the hand both on one side and the other. This familiarity had its grandeur; nevertheless, I advise imagination to be upon its guard (if one day after us . . . it should venture to reproduce the meeting

between these illustrious celebrities beneath the clear shades of the Jardies) lest to the interview between these two sovereigns, there be too grand a prestige awarded in the matter of costume.

"Balzac was picturesque in rags. His pantaloons, without braces, receded from his ample waistcoat *à la financière;* his shoes, trodden down, receded from his pantaloons; the knot of his cravat darted its points close to his ear; his beard was in a state of four days' high vegetation. As to Victor Hugo, he wore a grey hat of a rather doubtful shade; a faded blue coat with gold buttons, and a frayed black cravat, the whole set off by green spectacles of a shape and form to rejoice a rural bailiff.

"Whilst breakfast was preparing, Balzac proposed a tour on foot round about

his estate; and, therefore, we all three of us undertook that perilous descent to the last ridge of it, in danger, if we fell, of being precipitated into the road of Ville d'Avray.

"Victor Hugo was reserved in his praise of the property, until he exclaimed, 'At last, here is a tree!' for until then he had only seen shrubs.

"Balzac beamed with satisfaction at the cry of his guest.

"'Yes,' said he, 'and a famous tree it is. I bought it a short time since of the municipal corporation. Do you know what it yields?'

"'As it is a walnut-tree,' answered Hugo, 'it ought, I presume, to yield walnuts.'

"'It yields,' solemnly affirmed Balzac, '1500 livres a-year.'

"'Of walnuts?' asked Hugo.

"'Not of walnuts,' answered Balzac, 'but money.'

"'But is this a magic tree which grows enchanted walnuts?' asked Hugo.

"'Almost,' affirmed Balzac; 'but I owe you a little explanation on this point. I bought this tree from the corporation, at a very high price. Why? For the reason I am now about to tell you. By an old custom all the inhabitants of this place are compelled to bring all their refuse to the foot of this tree, as to a common sewer.'

"Hugo recoiled.

"'Reassure yourself,' said Balzac to him, 'this walnut-tree, since becoming mine, has not resumed its functions; although no inhabitant has the right to withdraw himself from this act of personal servitude, which is the remnant of an ancient feudal practice. Now, judge of

the wealth, invaluable to agriculturists for enriching their land, which the law directs shall be amassed at the foot of this venerable tree, daily;—municipal refuse which I shall cause to be covered with straw and deodorants, so as to have a mountain always ready to be sold to all the farmers, vine-dressers, market-gardeners, and great or small land-proprietors in the neighbourhood. It is a bank of gold which I have there,—in fact, to cut the matter short, it is guano;—guano, such as is deposited by myriads of birds upon the solitary isles of the Pacific Ocean.'

"'Ah!' replied Hugo, 'you say truly, my dear Balzac. It is guano, but without the birds.'

"'Without the birds!' echoed Balzac, laughing, and the breakfast-bell rang."

It was during that breakfast that Hugo,

in speaking of literature and the drama, incidentally mentioned his large profits as a dramatist. "Balzac," says Gozlan, "listened with the air of a martyr listening to an angel, when he heard Hugo recount the enormous sums which had accrued to him from his magnificent dramas. Visibly, this *coup de soleil* was likely to excite Balzac's brain for a long time to come." What Victor Hugo—the now wealthy dramatist—thought of the interior of the Jardies, can only be guessed by comparing the eccentric arrangements of that retreat, (its imaginary furniture, its chalked outlines, and other peculiarities which we have already considered) with the costly but chaste decorations of his own home.

In that abode—familiar to many, either from memory or frequent description—did Hugo hold his court, sur-

rounded by externals which have since found contrast in the not less proud nor less hospitable home of his exile. There is no intention here to catalogue the household gods of genius; for, even though the Parisian dining-room, hung with fine tapestries, grand with antique furniture, were remarkable for a fire-stove screen formed of military weapons, which, crossed and recrossed, represented various ages in the art of war; and even though in an alcove of the elegant Parisian drawing-room stood a divan, the canopy of which was ornamented by a floating crimson standard embroidered in gold (*'pris, en* 1830, *à la casbah d'Alger'*) how inferior are all these Lares to Nature's charms in the island retreat where the arms of France have failed to conquer!

Nevertheless, in this Parisian abode of Victor Hugo, a poet enriched by fame, and

ennobled by the king, (but to whom God in His gifts has alone been constant) all the arrangements were more or less splendid, and interesting, and fantastic. Conspicuous above all was one gem of art, an '*Iñez de Castro, de M. Saint-Evre*,' which had been presented to Victor Hugo by the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans.

The latter had paid marked attention to the author of "Notre-Dame" from the first period of her arrival as a bride in the country of her adoption and her love,—that country away from which she was doomed to die an exile and a widow. A grand fête at Versailles had been given by her father-in-law, the King of the French, upon the occasion of her marriage, to which fête all subjects, most illustrious in art and literature, were bidden. Amongst these Balzac had made his appearance within

the palace walls, habited for the occasion in the court costume of a marquis, which, as Victor Hugo says, 'was probably hired, and had certainly been made for somebody else;' but, after this satire on his less prosperous and more eccentric *confrère*, Victor Hugo has cause to rejoice in notifying how he himself was distinguished above his compeers — not by the splendour of his habiliments (for he was dressed in an old uniform of the National Guard which he had worn in 1830), but in the notice bestowed upon him by the royal young bride; who, leaning upon her husband's arm, declared to Victor Hugo that she had often spoken of him to *Monsieur de* Goëthe, (prefix more doubtful than dignified) and that she knew his verses by heart. Compliments, also, were then exchanged

between the King and the favoured poet.—But, to return to Balzac's breakfast-table. Hugo there repeated to him —the neglected of royalty—how, latterly, the Duc d'Orléans and his accomplished wife had sought to establish a centre of literature and of art in their own apartments in the Tuileries; but that, much as they desired to do so, they had been compelled to proceed with extreme caution, fearing, otherwise, to wound the peculiar susceptibilities of his majesty, Louis Philippe, styled by them in familiar converse, "*Père.*" The literary soirées which they began to give, were, therefore, not called by any but the humble name of *the fireside*, or the *chimney corner.* One celebrity would say to another, "Are you going to-night to the *cheminée?*" and many were the men and women of letters

who thus unostentatiously declared their engagement to be present at these receptions, which receptions continuing during one whole winter, brought their royal highnesses into familiar contact with those (of their future subjects, as it was supposed), who were most capable of appreciating their talents and their virtues.

The winter passed without any comment from the *père* on these *réunions;* and, encouraged by their success, the Duke and Duchess determined, at the beginning of the following winter, to extend their circle round the *cheminée.*

They did so; but one night, just as their guests were assembled, a message was brought to the Duke that his majesty, who was then also at the Tuileries, desired to speak with him. It was late. What could the King desire to say to his son

and heir at this time of night? It was long after his majesty's usual hour of retiring to rest.

This was what the King said:—

"My son, know that at the Tuileries there is but one king, but one salon, and but one *cheminée*. My *cheminée* is not extinct. You will please me every time that you and the Duchess will come to take your places before it."

The Duc d'Orléans retired. Henceforth his *cheminée* was proscribed. This anecdote, told by Hugo to Balzac, stimulated the mighty wrath of the latter.

"Stones fall. Paintings fade. Marble grows yellow, rots, splits. Granite itself crumbles. . . . The pen alone can save kings and their reigns from oblivion. Their glory, their immortality, their posterity, it is the pen. Without Virgil, Horace,

Livy, Ovid, who would recognise Augustus in the midst of so many of his name, nephew to Cæsar though he was, and all emperor though he may have been? Without the little briefless barrister, named Suetonius, not three Cæsars would have been known out of the twelve whose lives he has written. Without Tacitus, the Romans of his time would be confounded with the barbarians of Germany. Without Shakspeare, the reign of Elizabeth would gradually disappear from the history of England. Without Boileau, without Racine, without Corneille, without Pascal, without La Bruyère, without Molière, Louis XIV. reduced to his mistresses and to his wigs, is but a crowned ram, like the sign of an inn. Without the pen, Philippe le Roi would leave behind him a name less known than that of

Philippe the eating-house keeper of the Rue Montorgueil, or of Philippe, the famous pilferer and juggler. Some day it will be said (at least, I hope so, for his Majesty's sake), "Once upon a time there lived a king called Louis Philippe, who, by the grace of Victor Hugo, Lamartine,'" &c. . . .

But Balzac has just uttered a name, the owner of which had long been the intimate friend of Hugo, having been introduced to the latter by the Duc de Rohan, who, since the death of his wife, had become a priest. Chief amongst poets, likely to sympathize with sorrow like this consecrated to Heaven, was he of whom we are now about to get a clearer view—

LAMARTINE.

CHAPTER X.

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE.

Lamartine's birth — Father — Mother — Education — Travels — Adventures — Graziella — Return home — Mother's sympathy — Vocation and pension — Lamartine in Paris — Political wavering — Return to Italy — Sword sheathed — Death of *Elvire* — Christianity — "*Méditations*" — Diplomacy — Marriage — Inheritance — Magnificence — Charity — Political ambition — Non-election — Travels in the East — Lady Hester Stanhope — Domestic sorrow — Political success — Lamennais — Eloquence — The Duchesse d'Orléans — Literary friendships — Literary soirées — Paris journalism.

64918

At Mâcon, near the region of mountains whose snowy summits are above the clouds, and in the neighbourhood of luxuriant vineyards which rejoice the heart and eye of man, Alphonse de Lamartine was, towards the end of the last century, born by the favour of God—as he himself declares—of one of those elect families which are hereditary sanctuaries of Christian graces. His paternal grandfather had received the Cross of St. Louis at the battle of Fontenoy, and his father (a younger son), commonly called the Chevalier de Lamartine, married a lovely

protegée of that amiable but unhappy Duchesse d'Orléans, whose virtues were respected even under the Reign of Terror. A palace and a convent were the limits to the early experience of the Chevalier's young bride, but their marriage was one of mutual love; and this love it was which, during the Revolution, inspired her with courage — her infant Alphonse at her breast — to sustain her husband when in prison at Mâcon, and afterwards gladly to share with him and their younger children, the comparative poverty which anarchy had inflicted on them. So thus it comes to pass that the memory of Alphonse dawns in the small dilapidated Mâconnais château of Milly, and hovers round his mother, who was regarded by the surrounding peasantry as a Madonna of consolation and of charity.

Thanks to her son, here are two pictures of her: one, a young recluse; her form tall and flexible—arrayed in a long black robe and veil, the sombre folds of which contrast with white arms revealed by open sleeves, and with the brilliant face of youth and innocence. A gold cross gleams upon the breast.

The other picture, a mother,—who has soothed to sleep a child; around the tiny fingers still is twisted one long black tress of hair, which, in its luxuriance, shades the small fair head as it reclines on its natural resting-place. The mother's face—soft with love—is radiant with intelligence; for, listening to the voice of her husband—reading—she hears a mighty and eternal poem.*

* By the more aged of the Mâconnais, the sweet sound of this lady's own voice is remembered with a

Alphonse, like the royal minstrel of Holy Writ, was in childhood a shepherd; but, when climbing after the goats on the hills, he mused on the books which he heard discussed at the evening fireside.

"Tasso," he declares, "read by my father and listened to with tears in her eyes by my mother, was the first poet who ever touched my imagination and my heart."

freshness of enthusiasm, that bids defiance to time—Time, which in spite of steam and telegrams, brings little change with it in the aspect of a rustic people, who still dwell in the houses of their forefathers, in the neighbourhood of mountains, who still work in the same vineyards, and still tread the same wine-presses, who still are clothed in the same costume (the women in this district wear wide-brimmed straw hats to protect them from the sun), and whose general life is still one of primitive simplicity. And here the author of these pages can affirm that, in Mâcon, the name of the poet Lamartine ('M. Alphonse,' he is there often called, as though still a youth), and the traditions of his family, are held with much pride, and love, and

But this pastoral and poetic life was suddenly clouded, when, by the advice of influential relatives, the noble and tender father of Alphonse was reluctantly induced to send him to a seminary at Lyon. An iron gate was shut betwixt his mother and himself, and he felt that the "honeymoon of his first years had fled never to return."

Lamartine suffered much from his first

reverence; and if, in passing through the remote, quaint town, a stranger is known to be on the way to Lamartine's château, situated within a short drive from it through a picturesque and fertile country, many are the offers of service and of guidance on the way. As to the present dwelling of the illustrious poet, its interior differs—according to its more imposing outer aspect—from that he describes as the cradle of his childhood; but nature, art, hospitality, simplicity, and domestic virtue,—French taste and English comfort,—all there combine to impress the visitor with a delicious sense of Home. But here the curtain must drop on this scene of memories which are sacred.

experience of school life, and, like Balzac, —under early discipline—was seized with despair.

"I fell," says Lamartine, "from that nest lined with down, and warm with family tenderness, upon the cold and hard ground of a riotous school, peopled by two hundred children, all strangers to me, and all more or less jeerers, wicked, vicious. This school was ruled by blunt, violent, and interested masters, whose indifference was never for a single day disguised from me by their insinuating but insipid talk. After some months of this ordeal, I resolved to escape. I had but three francs in my pocket. . . . At six leagues from Lyon I entered a little inn and asked for dinner; but scarcely was I seated before the omelette and the cheese which a good woman had prepared for me, than the door

opened, and I saw the director of the house of education enter, escorted by a gendarme.

"They recaptured me; they bound my hands; they took me back; they shut me up alone in a sort of dungeon.

"I passed two months without communication with anybody whatever, except the director, who in vain demanded of me a sign of repentance. Wearied at length by my firmness, they returned me to my relations. I was badly received by all the family with the exception of my poor mother, to whose intercession it was due that I was never again sent back to Lyon.

"A college at Belley, upon the frontier of Savoy, and under the direction of the Jesuits, was at this time in great renown. My mother conducted me there.

"In a few days, I felt the prodigious

difference which exists between a venal education sold to unfortunate children for the love of gold, and instruction given in the name of God."

It was at this college that Lamartine first became acquainted with young Count Aymon de Virieu, the loved friend of later years, the son of that saintly widow, whose existence, since her husband fell in revolutionary strife, had been but "one tear, one hope, one invocation." Here, also, as in the case of George Sand, during the early period of her convent life in Paris, Lamartine declares that his soul was enraptured by the religious ceremonies of which he was a witness; and more especially because the ecclesiastics who were lavish of them, were the first to give themselves up to them with the sincerity and fervour of their faith.

At sixteen years of age, Alphonse was at home once more. To his revered instructors, the Jesuits, he had addressed his lines, beginning :—

"Aimables sectateurs d'une aimable sagesse,
Bientot je ne vous verrai plus."

But his sorrow at leaving them was more than compensated by his joy at finding himself once more at Château Milly; free to roam beneath the blue sky and amidst the scenes that were dear to him; and in the presence of his parents,—of his mother especially. To hear her voice, to feel her touch, to be the object of her tender care, all this was joy unspeakable to him.

And the mother! She beheld in the outward form of her son, now no longer a child in years, a model of manly beauty. And in his heart she soon discerned poetic faith. He resumed his desultory studies,

which comprised, principally, Dante, Tasso, Shakspeare, Milton, Chateaubriand, Ossian.

"Yet something," says he, "was wanting to my complete understanding of Ossian; it was but the shade of a love. How adore without an object? How soliloquize one's sorrows without grief? How weep without tears?"

So to a young lady, named Lucy, who lived in the neighbourhood, he addressed his first sentimental stanzas; and sorrow soon followed in the form of his parents' displeasure. The young lady lived to be the bride of another; but, in later years, the poet's tears have been shed for "Lucy, who sleeps beneath the snow!"

Lamartine's father desired that he should adopt his own profession of arms, but his mother pleaded strongly against a vocation for which her son had shown no predilection. Both his parents, how-

ever, saw that a life of idleness was no longer safe for him, and they therefore agreed to send him to Italy in company with some relations who were journeying thither.

Alphonse set forth on his travels; but he was determined to emancipate himself from the guardianship under which he was placed; and at one stage of his journey, having written home to ask permission to travel alone, he started at once for Rome without waiting for a reply to his letter.

"If a prohibition come," said he to himself, "it will come too late. I shall be reproved, but I shall be pardoned. I shall return, but I shall have seen the world." His finances were very limited, but he hoped—and not in vain—that a relative of his mother, who lived at Naples, would be his banker.

On the route from Florence to Rome, he found himself fellow-traveller with the singer, Davide (who was journeying to take his farewell benefit at Naples), and the singer's nephew, a handsome youth, about the same age as Lamartine himself.

A friendship sprang up quickly between the two young men; they chatted and laughed together during the day, and in the night journeys each alternately pillowed his head upon the other's shoulder. At Rome they took up their abode at the same hotel.

It was there that Lamartine slept the deep, refreshing sleep of youth, after its first long flight from old scenes and old associations. He was awakened in the morning by the voice of his young fellow-traveller, who told him that breakfast was ready. Lamartine arose from his bed,

dressed himself, and went down-stairs, when he beheld standing before him, not the singer's nephew, but a beautiful Roman girl, with black braided hair pinned together by gold and pearls, and dressed with French *coquetterie* and Italian grace. Lamartine started back. "Who is she?" he ejaculated.

The beautiful Roman girl blushed, laughed, and said, "My friend, a change of costume cannot change the heart; but it is for you now to give me flowers, and not for me to offer them to you."

Lamartine, however, had no wish to exchange bouquets with Camilla, when, the next day, he saw her dancing, in boy's clothes, on the tomb of Cecilia Metella.

He remained at Rome, in a pious painter's family, and afterwards proceeded to Naples.

There it was that he beheld Graziella, a fisherman's daughter of Greek origin.

He loved her, but not as she loved him,—passionately. "True love," says he, "is the ripe fruit of life. At twenty years of age love is not known, but only imagined. In vegetable nature when the fruit comes the leaves fall; thus is it, perhaps, in human nature. I have often thought so since I have counted my grey hairs . . . I was but vanity. Vanity is the most silly and the most cruel of vices."

Nevertheless, in another place he says, addressing himself to Graziella, "The longer I have lived, the nearer I have drawn to thee in thought; there is nought that has tarnished my memory of thee; that memory is like the watch-fires of thy father's bark, which in distance shine

the brightest . . . Thy real sepulchre is in my soul. Thy name is cherished, and not in vain by me . . . There is always at the bottom of my heart a well of warm tears, which filter drop by drop, and which fall in secret upon thy memory to refresh it and to embalm it within me."

For months, in all tenderness and purity, did Lamartine live beneath the roof of Graziella and her relations. Then came a mutual confession of love,—of love sincere on both sides, but differing in its nature.

Suddenly, Lamartine was recalled home. He promised to return to Graziella, but they never met again.

She died.

Who that has listened to this episode in Lamartine's life, as told by his lips, or has read it, as recorded by his pen, can

have failed to thrill and to weep over the fate of Graziella?

To her he had read the story of Paul and Virginia. "Graziella knelt before me . . . She snatched the book from my hands . . . She opened it . . . She spoke to it, she embraced it. She replaced it respectfully upon my knees; then clasped her hands together and looked up at me supplicatingly."

The story of Paul and Virginia was a revelation to Graziella, who adored Lamartine. Her devotion, her supposed abandonment, her death, her humility, and pious resignation, have called forth too many tears to need enlarging upon here.

In a sequestered nook of "the sonorous shore of Sorrento, is a small narrow stone; a flowering shrub conceals this stone: but, if a stranger pause to se-

parate the blades of grass which grow beneath that shrub, he will read:—

"'She was but sixteen years of age! It is much too soon to die!'"

Lamartine returned home. His mother's eyes discerned that the sentimental youth had become a suffering man. But, when one night he received a packet containing the hair of Graziella, and the words . . . "Love thou my soul!" he was heart-stricken; and, in the dreary dawn that followed, his mother —seated by his bedside—sighed, and said:

"How pale, how sad thou art! Who could have foretold that I should see my child, at only twenty years of age, sapped in soul and withered in heart!"

"I started up at these words," says Lamartine, "as though my mother in speaking thus had failed in reverence towards a memory which I respected a

thousand times more than I respected myself.

"'Oh! pardon!' said I to her, clasping my hands together and speaking in an accent of severe supplication, 'speak not to me with this disdain of a grief of which you have never known the object. *If* you knew!'

"'I wish to know nothing,' said she, placing her beautiful hand before my mouth. 'But what wilt thou do now? How wilt thou endure the empty, monotonous, lazy life of home,—a life which is the more exposed to the guilty passions of the heart, as it is the less filled with the duties and the occupations of an active career? . . . . I speak not to reproach thee; thou knowest that if these tears from my eyes could change themselves into gold for thee, I would pour it all freely into thy hands.'"

Lamartine at last hoped that in literature he would find consolation. Experience had already dispelled some first illusions; and his mother, only too glad to forward his views, in the hope of their weaning him from past memories, exerted her influence over his father that he might go to Paris.

To enable him to do so, his father made him an allowance liberal according to the revenues of Château Milly, but which would have been utterly insufficient for Alphonse, in Paris, had not his mother assisted him.

Drawing forth from the last of her caskets a large diamond, mounted as a ring, the only jewel which remained to her of all those she had possessed in her youth, she secretly slipped it into the hand of her son, saying, "Go, seek glory!"

In Paris young Lamartine's politics were uncertain. He saw poetry in all things; and, viewed by the light of his imagination, there was sublimity in the cause either of Legitimists or Buonapartists.

In Paris pleasure courted young Lamartine. But, wearying quickly of both politics and pleasure, he longed again to cross the Alps that he might weep once more upon the spot which was eloquent to him of the memory of Graziella.

To that land, or rather to the memory which consecrated it, the world at large is indebted for the first part of his "Méditations."*

* It has been reported that the poet was two years before he found a publisher for his "Méditations," and that a publisher then consented as a favour to take the MS., out of which he made a large fortune.

But Lamartine himself tells us (1863), that M.

Meanwhile, he had entered the army. Royalist by family tradition, and stimulated by the martial ardour of his young companions in arms, he had bravely and ardently espoused the cause of Louis XVIII., and subsequently clung to that cause with the enthusiasm of poetry for misfortune.

But Alphonse laid down the sword and took up the pen, because in the strife of mortal combat, and amidst the orgies of garrison life, he yearned for Nature's sanctuary in which to hear "his own heart beat," and from whence, in the shifting clouds, and in the glittering stars, in the sunshine, in the winds, in the woods, and the waters, he could behold the

Gosselin (who published V. Hugo's "Notre Dame de Paris"), "se pressait d'imprimer et de donner au public mes premiers essais de poésie, intitulés, 'Méditations poétiques et religieuses."

works of God, or listen to the echoes of His voice.

Amongst Swiss rocks and mountains, mighty revelations were disclosed to the poet, but it was from the ashes of human passion that his divinest faith and love arose.

Elvire (or Julie) is said to have been a Creole of St. Domingo, and an orphan. To Lamartine she is a memory, to us she is a type; for death again interposed, and Elvire lay lifeless before the poet-lover, with the crucifix clasped to her heart which would throb for him no more.

"I dared not approach those adored remains," says he, "I dared not. . . .

"But the priest understood my silence; and, releasing the crucifix from the icy fingers of Elvire, he held it towards me. 'Here,' declares he, 'is remembrance; and

here is hope, carry this away with you, my son.'"

Lamartine, poet son of a pious mother, was not slow to interpret the language of the Cross; and how we find the Duc de Rohan, prince of this world, and priest of heaven, who had been taught that language by the death of his adored wife, helping Lamartine to place his "Méditations poétiques et religieuses" within reach of all suffering men and women.

The little volume, containing the first essays, was anonymous; but Talleyrand declared that the unknown author was the poet of the Soul; and Chateaubriand confessed that one ode of this new book was worth all his "Genius of Christianity."

The Duchesse de Broglie, daughter of Madame de Staël, and,—Lamartine says—her most sublime incarnation, had already

practically proved her appreciation of the poet by helping to obtain for him the post of under-secretary to the embassy at Naples. But even she had found it no easy task to allure the young bard from home, which in Paris he shared with the friend of his boyhood, Aymon de Virieu.

The *mot* of Talleyrand, which heralded Lamartine's fame, was repeated to him; but before that word had time to echo in Paris, the poet had gone forth on his diplomatic mission.

On his way, he stopped at Mâcon; and there, under the protection of his mother, he found a young English lady, by whom, in the previous year, he had been much attracted at Chambéry, where he was introduced to her by the Marquise La Pierre, of whom she was an adopted daughter.

A mutual sympathy soon displayed itself. They were predestined for each other by beauty, by grace, by talent, by virtue.

The young *Anglaise*, who already worshipped his genius, yearned in her gentle tenderness to console the poet for his memories and to share his hopes.

His faith soon became her faith, his people her people. She touched his heart, and it was healed.

They were married at Chambéry. The next few years of the life of Lamartine—*chargé d'affaires*—were chiefly passed in Italy. At Florence he was happy in being treated as a member of the amiable Grand Ducal family; he rejoiced in the social and artistic atmosphere of the Palazzo Pitti. Florence—that modern Athens—was congenial to the poet, who, nevertheless,

calls England the land of his adoption; for, during occasional visits to that land of political freedom and domestic virtue, he was at home with his wife's relations.

The death of his firstborn child, a son, was the only cloud which obscured the sunshine of these early years, and his sorrow for this loss was enhanced rather than diminished by the possession of wealth; for he had inherited a fortune from the death of a relative, and gold was the least of his wife's endowments.

It was now, therefore, that Lamartine, already wearing the Cross of Honour, first displayed his vast idea of charity, and his long dormant political ambition.

Many are the tales which are told of his princely generosity. Of talent struggling against poverty or obscurity, he was the deliverer and the benefactor. Upon a

journey he would go out of his way to relieve the sick or the poor. Many are the widows and the orphans in France who have had cause to bless the name of Lamartine.

But he, the friend of princes, the benefactor of the poor, the living type of lofty chivalry, the universal poet of the Soul, was—because a poet—unrecognised in his own country as a popular politician. This fact, however, was hard for him to understand, for of Byron he says, "Heaven denied to him the opportunity of doubly illustrating his name of poet by adding to it that of Statesman, Hero, or Liberator. Yet, had he lived, Greece to-day would probably not have sought another king!"

So Lamartine left France for the East. His own country may have been the loser, but the whole world was certainly the

gainer by this self-expatriation, for it was during his travels in Palestine that Lamartine wrote "Le Voyage en Orient."

In this journey to a land which to him was full of hallowed associations, and amid scenes with which in childhood his revered mother had familiarised him by her saintly teaching, by her conversation, which always had in it some element of heaven, and by engravings with which she sought to illustrate her lessons of the Holy Land and to appeal to his dawning imagination, Lamartine, sailing in his own yacht, was accompanied by his wife and daughter, their sole surviving child.

"I burned," says he, "with desire to go and visit the mountains where God had descended; those deserts where angels came to show to Hagar the hidden spring from which to revive her loved child,

banished and dying of thirst; those large rivers which issued from paradise terrestrial; that sky, from whence angels were seen descending and ascending upon the ladder of Jacob." And with this burning desire did both his companions sympathise; that wife who was as the angel on the ladder of his life; and that daughter, Julie, who inherited her mother's gentleness and her father's genius,—Julie, one of those beings "who are only for a brief season lent by Heaven to earth."

But even from Jerusalem did Lamartine still maintain an active correspondence with the electors of Dunkerque; and his interview, in the land sacred to miracles, with Lady Hester Stanhope, the niece of William Pitt, who, regarded as a prophetess in the East, had taken up her abode there, confirmed rather than diminished his poli-

tical ambition. She told him she had read in the stars that he was born to take a leading part in the affairs of France, and to be a chief amongst his countrymen; that his country was the one alone in all Europe which had a great mission to fulfil; and, looking down upon his foot as he stood before her, she added that she observed from the arch of its instep he was predestined to conquer.

Lamartine went out from the presence of Lady Hester Stanhope dreaming of the high destinies which she had predicted for him, and prepared to return to Beyrout, where he had left his wife and daughter. But he was met on his own threshold by messengers of evil tidings. Death had entered his dwelling since he had left it. His daughter, Julie, was expiring. He was only in time to behold her

last agonies, to hear her last farewell, and then a black cloud descended upon that destiny by the prophecy of which he had just before been elated.*

The poet returned to France accompanied by his stricken wife and by the coffin which contained all that remained

* "Des sanglots étouffés sortaient de ma demeure ;
L'amour seul suspendait pour moi sa dernière heure :
Elle m'attendait pour mourir !

C'était le seul débris de ma longue tempête,
Seul fruit de tant de fleurs, seul vestige d'amour,
Une larme au départ, un baiser au retour,
Pour mes foyers errants une éternelle fête ;
C'était sur ma fenêtre un rayon de soleil,
Un oiseau gazouillant qui buvait sur ma bouche ;
Un souffle harmonieux la nuit près de ma couche,
Une caressé à mon réveil.

C'était plus : de ma mère, hélas ! c'était l'image ;
Son regard par ses yeux semblait me revenir ;
Par elle mon passé renaissait avenir,
Mon bonheur n'avait fait que changer de visage."

* * * *

on earth of their daughter, who had left France with them in the plenitude of health, buoyant with the inexperienced hopes of youth, and brilliant in beauty.

By a curious coincidence, the electoral College of Dunkerque, having decided on Lamartine as political representative, sent emissaries to the East to recall him to France exactly at the time of Lady Hester Stanhope's prophecy and of his daughter's death.

The sorrow of his own life now opened the heart of Lamartine more than ever to the sorrow of humanity at large. In France many griefs were represented (so at least it seemed to the poet's heart) by political struggles.

But here it must be remembered that France, at this time, was a battle-field of theories, of which each separate leader

believed, or proclaimed, himself to be the apostle of progress and of social amelioration. Even priests foretold a sublime reform.

Of Lamennais we have already had a glimpse; presently, it may be worth while to look back at the past life of this apostle and apostate. Meanwhile, if some amongst his disciples shrank back dismayed at the storms he predicted, listen with what words he renewed their strength for conflict:—

"Sometimes, across a country sweeps a wind which dries up plants, and then do their withered stems bend towards the earth; but, bathed by dew, they resume their freshness, and raise again their drooping heads.

"There are ever burning winds which, passing over the soul, parch it. Prayer is the dew which refreshes it."

Could this be the heretic proscribed by Rome as possessed of "*une méchanceté sans retenue?*"

The thunderbolts of the Vatican only infuriated him. With one hand he still pointed to celestial visions; but with the other he unrolled the scroll of the future, which was blood-stained and scorched with fiery vengeance.

Already have we seen Lamennais with Victor Hugo. Behold him now with Lamartine! But the poet was a poet still; and, gazing at the motto affixed by some Republican prophets above the portals of the Future,—"God and Liberty,"—he saw not that the words were written in blood.

In the Chamber of Deputies, political foes listened with ravished attention to his words, even though his argument, which interpreted the views of his party, tran-

scended common-place conviction. Lamartine was always sublime. And honest; witness his refusal to attend the literary soirées already named, which were held at the Tuileries by the Duke and Duchess of Orléans. Lamartine dreaded lest by his admiration of their virtues (and especially of those of the charming and gifted woman, who was at that time regarded as the mother of the future king of the French) he should be allured as politician. To him it was reserved, in a chapter of future history, to protect the Duchess and her fatherless sons through the dangers of the mob, to support her and to sustain them in their appeal to the people for justice and for mercy; but, before the storm burst, when it was only portended by clouds and lurid streaks on the political horizon, Lamartine, with a virtue

worthy of Brutus, estranged himself from the presence of this amiable woman, this royal mother.

But in the society of Madame Émile de Girardin, with whom, as we have seen, he had long been well acquainted, Lamartine was often to be found. There did the poet stand face to face with the Realist of Romance,— Balzac. There, looking on his hostess, and listening to her alternately witty and pathetic words, did his memory travel back through past years to the time when he first beheld her, the young poetess, gazing down on troubled waters at the Cascades of Terni. In the salon of Madame de Girardin was also to be found Victor Hugo. From the time when she was a girl had he associated with her in the confraternity of genius. Well did Hugo remember the pale, statuesque wo-

man, clad in black velvet, now before him, as Delphine Gay, when, at the first representation of his "Hernani," she, rapturously applauding that piece, took the hearts of her fellow-countrymen by storm; more especially as, when looking up at the box of the fair enthusiast, they there beheld her—an etherealized-looking being clad in cloud-like white, draped by a scarf of sky-blue, and with hair floating like a golden glory about her head. Thus, too, did Théophile Gautier, her guest of these later years, and the disciple of Balzac, remember Delphine, who never through life forgot the advice of her mother (the brilliant Sophie Gay), "Be a woman in your garments, and a man in your grammar."

Rachel, the *tragédienne* for whom expressly Madame de Girardin wrote some

of her best plays, was also admitted within her circle,—a circle vast and illustrious, but about to be invaded by death, and scattered by political storms. Nevertheless, whilst it remained intact, it was a circle of genius into which wealth and nobility acknowledged it to be their greatest privilege to enter.

Seldom, however, did Monsieur Émile de Girardin find time to attend his wife's *réunions*, for, in proportion to their increasing brilliance, was the political horizon darkened. As a leading journalist of Paris, therefore, he was ever on the alert, helping, indeed, to guide public opinion by his pen; the influence of which pen was, practically, as we shall see, acknowledged by George Sand, who was brought into contact with certain social chiefs, of whom we are now about to get a nearer view.

CHAPTER XI.

Lamennais — His birth — Parentage — Education — George Sand — "Lélia" — Sainte Beuve — Buloz — "Revue des deux Mondes" — Michel de Bourges — Balzac's drama, "Vautrin" — Excitement concerning "Vautrin" — The night of "Vautrin's" representation — Public exhibition of malevolence — Hisses *v.* claps — The wag in the theatre — The "Vicomte de Launay" unsheathes the sword — "Lettre Parisienne" — Balzac's schemes for making money — "Vautrin" under the ban — Balzac's mysterious dispearances — His table-talk with George Sand — Victor Hugo and Mademoiselle Mars — Sharp contest between author and actress — Balzac at dramatic rehearsals — M. Harel, dramatic dictator — Balzac and Cooper the novelist — English girl's homage to Balzac.

FÉLICITÉ DE LAMENNAIS—younger son of a sceptical father and a saintly mother—was born in 1782, where his family (subsequently impoverished by the Revolution) had long been distinguished as builders of ships which, in war, had won victories.

At an early age he lost his mother; and his father, who survived her, seems first to have noticed his antagonism of character in the obstinacy with which, as chorister and otherwise, he persisted in attending cathedral services. The Bishop

of St. Malo, however, took a different view of the boy's character, and reprimanded the father for seeking to check such manifestations of precocious piety.

Meanwhile, young Félicité had taught himself to read, in defiance of an old nurse whose patience had been exhausted by her ineffectual attempts to instruct him. His elder brother, who had failed to make him learn Latin, was afterwards astonished to find that, aided only by grammar and dictionary, Félicité had mastered that language.

Thus, self-taught, he plunged into philosophical works which had been accumulated by his uncle, a partisan of Voltaire; and this so effectually, that when the time came for his first communion, he refused, it is said, to partake of it.

Public worship in France had just been

re-established when, in preference to the cathedral which was now reopened, young Lamennais sought a refuge in the College of St. Malo, where he taught mathematics.

It must have been at this period of his life when the love, which is supposed to have influenced it, took possession of him. Ardent in soul, but diminutive in body, his face was remarkable for its powers of attraction and repulsion. Elsewhere in these pages has this face been sketched, but physiognomists who looked on it once were sure to look again at the discrepancy which was to be read there between the large fiery eyes, the small smiling mouth, the enormous nose, and the frown — whether of earnestness or vindictiveness, who can say!

A face of passion none can doubt; of passion which, terrific in hatred, could

scarcely have been less terrific in unreciprocated love. So, having sought rest and found none, either in human affection or out of the pale of his first religious faith, he—a misanthrope, aged twenty-nine years—impoverished in fortune, wearing coarse garments, but uttering polished sarcasm, austere in discipline, and profound in learning, received the tonsure, and subsequently became a seminarist at Saint Sulpice, where he held himself aloof from the confraternity, although consenting, just when literature was at a discount, to collaborate more than one work with his elder brother, who occasionally resided with him at La Chénaie, a moderate estate they both possessed in Brittany.

Ordained priest by the Bishop of Rennes, Lamennais, after various vicissitudes, re-

turned from Brittany to Paris, and, as an author, soon became remarkable for genius as for orthodoxy; but, gradually propounding social theories, his writings began to be regarded with proportionate apprehension by the hierarchy; a fear, perhaps, which led to the fact of his meeting with a distinguished welcome, when, for the first time, he visited Rome. So honoured, indeed, was he there, that many now reverenced him as destined some day to wear a cardinal's hat. This not being the Pope's intention, Lamennais returned disappointed to France, where, in Brittany, he inhabited La Chénaie, and again wrote books; these, however, soon absolutely startled both Church and State by certain principles of reform, which, with increasing power, they advocated. Some priests, nevertheless, were not behind many politicians in hailing the dawn of this

ecclesiastic's democracy as that of a new day of progress, and around him gathered an enthusiastic band of his countrymen, amongst whom were the sincere and pious Lacordaire, and Montalembert; the latter, by his social rank and influence, sustaining this new apostle and his disciples.

Then was the journal called "The Future" founded, the motto of which was "God and Liberty."

Forewarned of condemnation, Lamennais again flew to Rome, hoping to avert the storm; but a deaf ear was there turned to his appeal, and scarcely had he returned to France, when, by a *lettre encyclique*, "L'Avenir" ("The Future") was placed under a ban. Its editor (again retired into Brittany) officiated, as usual, at mass; but Lacordaire and others of his disciples, now implored him to submit to the decrees of Rome.

No. The storm only stimulated the antagonism of Lamennais, and he refused to yield, even though his own brother and Lacordaire, it is said, both knelt before him at the altar imploring him to do so. The word *heretic* was then hissed out by some who had thought that in him they had followed the great leader of social reform and sacerdotal regeneration. "You forsake me then?" he cried. And there were some who fled from the fascination to which they now dreaded to succumb.

But Lamennais "the apostate" became a power feared by kings. Thrones were shaken by his publication of "Paroles d'un Croyant," in the pages of which, alongside of the most revolting, the most appalling images, are thoughts which seem to have had an origin divine. To poets, to dreamers of theocracy, these thoughts

came home as winged messengers of Heaven.

Dare it here be said that, as such, they were received into the bosom of George Sand? Remember, reader, as she does, how fearful was her first experience in the world of Paris and of politics! Or, if forgotten by you, let her here remind you of it.

"The moment was a solemn one in history, when I first opened my eyes. The Republic dreamed of in July had resulted in the massacres of Varsovie, and the holocaust of the Cloître Saint Merry. The cholera had just decimated the world.

"Saint Simonism which, for a moment, had electrified imagination, was persecuted . . . Art, also, by deplorable aberrations, had sullied its cradle of romantic reform. No old formula of faith had I,

in a social point of view, to aid me in wrestling against this cataclysm, by which the reign of matter was inaugurated; and I found not in the republican and socialist ideas of the moment a sufficient light wherewith to combat against the darkness, which by Mammon was spread over the world.

"I remained then alone with my dream of Omnipotent Divinity . . . Under profound depression I wrote 'Lélia;' by fits and starts, and without intention of making it a work to publish. Nevertheless, I read a certain number of scattered fragments to Sainte Beuve, who advised me to continue, and who counselled Buloz to ask me for a chapter in behalf of the 'Revue des Deux Mondes.' . . To me it was a sort of solace to yield to the *imprévu* of my reverie, even to isolate myself from

the reality of the actual world, and to trace synthesis of doubt and suffering.

"During a whole year this manuscript dragged beneath my pen; it was often quitted with disdain, and often resumed with ardour. I do believe that in point of art it is a book devoid of common sense, but as something of spontaneous inspiration in detail, it has for that very reason been but the more remarked by artistes."

Years after the publication of "Lélia," George Sand declares, "Still did I go on seeking religious truth and social truth in one truth."

As also professed to seek Lamennais, for whom Madame Sand confesses "it needed no long time to be seized with respect and affection, for he was full of faith," she adds, "and he told his faith with precision, with clearness, with warmth;

his words were eloquent, his deductions lively, his metaphors radiant." . . . With respect indeed, she still speaks of "his simple manners, his sudden movements, his awkward attitudes, his frank gaiety, his headstrong obstinacy; nay, even of his coarse clothes, clean but poor, and of his blue stockings; for Lamennais, in outward appearances, was the 'Cloarek Breton.'"

And not only did he excite her sympathy by his genius; for by the time George Sand knew Lamennais, he had 'but a feeble breath of life in his breast;' from his clear eye still darted flame, from his head it could be seen that he was formed for a life of renunciation, of contemplation, and of '*prédication;*' but, from his feeble and meagre form, it was also too evident that life to him was a state of continual suffering.

After even this brief explanation, who

can condemn George Sand for attempting to maintain by her pen some opinions to which she believed Lamennais a martyr, and for advocating views, which, in her own case, were the result of life's fever-dream? Under less public excitement, and never stung into opposition as she had been, Victor Hugo, and even Lamartine, had been influenced by Lamennais. But not by him alone was Madame Sand drawn into the vortex of politics; for, as told in a preceding chapter, the process by which she regained Nohant and the sole guardianship of her children, was conducted by the celebrated legal advocate and great Socialist leader—Michel de Bourges—to whom she gave the *sobriquet* of "Éverard."

Éverard had read George Sand's "Lélia;" and one day the author stood before him to seek his professional aid

in redressing those personal wrongs which had stimulated her genius, and under the bitter sense of which she had written—how she has just told us—that poem of profound depression and discouragement.

A remarkable sight was Éverard as then the author of "Lélia" first beheld him,—and another suffering being she quickly recognized in him; for Éverard (whose phrenological development was so remarkable that he seemed to have two skulls moulded into one), George Sand tells us, was ill in health; Éverard could not live. Mentally he was of an admirable organization; intelligence, veneration, enthusiasm, subtilty, vastness, were balanced by tenderness, friendship, domesticity, physical courage; but his chest, stomach, liver, all were invaded. And it was precisely, Madame Sand declares, that ab-

sence of physical life which touched her; for although—sober, and austere, and courageous—Éverard tried to subdue his sufferings, it was only too evident that soul and body were at constant war with each other. Peasant-born, he still dressed as a peasant; but beneath coarse outer garments he wore fine linen, and otherwise in his personal habits so fastidious was he, that some democrats, his disciples, suspected that this Socialist was a Sybarite.

Moreover, in presence of a lady, even though she wore male costume, Éverard refused to keep on his hat, but he replaced it by a silk pocket-handkerchief which, knotted round his head, he unconsciously twisted, when excited by argument, into the most fantastic and ever-varying headgear.

Ultimately, as mentioned in a previous

chapter, by Éverard's legal skill was Madame Sand reinstated Châtelaine of Nohant; but, whilst the tedious process was pending, which restored her property, he—by a curious anomaly—never wearied in the attempt to convert her to Socialism; and this, (whilst he himself was "dying every hour,") with an energy so intense that it fatigued even Lélia whom he most surprised, and charmed, and terrified. At last, after one conversation in which his theory was unmasked, George Sand demanded her passport, feeling it better to fly in search of "flowers and butterflies in Egypt and Persia" than to await, in France, the issue of her own cause, or the *dénouement* of that tremendous social question by which in every shape and form she was now surrounded. Her flight was prevented; her fate was sealed.

Hitherto, democrat dreams had by her been regarded as mighty metaphors, not difficult, indeed, to interpret as prophetic of a more equal participation in human happiness, but hard of understanding to her—the Châtelaine—with regard to *dépècement* of property; for this she declares, "I never could imagine would make men happy, but on condition of rendering them barbarians."*

* Nevertheless, from the first moment of their acquaintance, she talked to Éverard more of ideas than of facts. He seemed to her much older than he really was, for although not yet forty years of age, his aspect was that of a bent, thin, bald man of sixty; but when he began to talk, his pale face became brilliant with animation; his eyes flashed, his white teeth gleamed; he was no longer old and weak, he was young and powerful. His whole moral being was also full of contradictions. Of gentleness extreme, he was in speech tyrannical; of tender heart, he was, nevertheless, authoritative. Thus, so do

Éverard, who in the strength of his vast power was determined not to let "Lélia" escape, she knew to be personally incapable of hurting a fly. "What, therefore, was my stupefaction," she ejaculates, "when, one night (in Paris) he, pressed by my close questions, and by those still more direct and pressing of Planet, (opposition journalist) at length unfolded to

extremes meet, he was autocratic even in his Socialist theories. 'He desired to make men slaves,' says Madame Sand, 'but only that he might make them happy.' From the first moment of her appearing before him, Éverard, who confesses himself '*toqué*' with 'Lélia,' determined to convert his client. From the facts, therefore, on which she came to consult him, he, as before said, soon soared into a region of ideas which dazzled her. From seven o'clock in the evening until four o'clock in the morning, did they talk and walk; for he had set out to attend her back to her own door at midnight, but every time 'good-night' was said, some fresh thought struck him, and (accompanied by Fleury and Planet, her friends and his followers) she wandered

us his system. We were standing on the Pont des Saint Pères. There was a ball, or concert, at the Château of the Tuileries; we saw the reflection of lights on the trees of the garden. We heard the sound of music . . . I had fallen into a reverie . . . I cared no longer, at that moment about the Social question . . . I was enjoying the charming night . . . the soft reflections of the moon upon the

with him through the silent streets of Bourges, which were lighted by a magnificent moonlight. "We were all three conquered," says Madame Sand, "we felt lifted above ourselves" . . . . even Planet declared that he had never yet beheld him thus; indeed, it seemed only now for the first time that Éverard revealed himself. Madame Sand at length retired to rest, but she dreamed of—what? Some painful allegorical mystery which so excited her, that the next morning she (the first, though not the last, time) fled from Éverard. She dreaded his power, because she felt that it was destined to influence her against her will.

water; the vague melodies of the royal *fête.* Suddenly: 'Civilization,' cried Éverard, infuriated, and loudly striking his cane on the sonorous balustrades of the bridge—'Civilization! Yes! That is the grand word of *artistes.* But it is I who tell you, that to regenerate and to renew your corrupt society, this fine river must be red with blood, this execrable palace must be reduced to ashes, this vast city on which you look must be a *grève nue*, a site upon which the great family of the poor shall drive the plough, and build its habitations!' . . . My laugh of incredulity was a fresh excitement to his energy, and he burst forth into a horrible but magnificent declamation . . . . a malediction against the impure Jerusalem . . . . then, reversing the picture, he depicted the world of the future as, visionary, he beheld it at that

moment; the ideal of pastoral life, with morals of the golden age, a terrestrial paradise flourishing on the smoking ruins of the old world . . . . The clock of the Château struck two . . . 'For two hours,' said I, 'thou hast been pleading the cause of death, and I have believed myself listening to Dante! . . . So,' cried he, indignantly, 'thou dost hearken to me as to a poem or an orchestra! Thou art not more convinced than that!'"

But her obstinacy only excited him the more; she laughed, but she felt her strength yielding, as has already been shown in her attempt to seek safety in flight. The time, politically, was one of epidemic excitement. What more need be said? It was not possible, peculiarly exposed as she was to its influence, that she could escape contagion, if not conviction. Personally, her

wrongs—as pleaded by the eloquent advocate, who sought to convert her—seemed in affinity with those he pointed out to her in the world at large; and in her literary life she was surrounded by reformers and malcontents. Amongst the latter was Balzac.

Balzac had written a play called "Vautrin."

"Never," says Léon Gozlan, "since the appearance of the first dramas of Victor Hugo, had the curiosity of the public been so excited as upon the eve of this representation (March 14, 1840). Although politics were very ardent at the moment, although questions of reform already portended the revolution of 1848, all was hushed in prospect of the representation of 'Vautrin'—all—even political banquets and foreign policy, and

England, and Egypt. This public excitement was a homage involuntarily rendered to an European talent, well worthy by many claims to create a distraction, which is, perhaps, unique in the history of art.*

The night came at last. Royalty was present. "Vautrin" was a drama of five acts, in prose. The actors had quarrelled amongst themselves. The house was badly arranged. Balzac had flattered himself that he had brought together a *salle* devoted to his success, but he had not calculated on the length of time which had elapsed between the day, when with over-eagerness he had 'placed' the tickets of admission, and the night of representation. Meanwhile, Balzac's enemies had

* "Vautrin" was dedicated to Laurent Jan, who, as seen in a previous chapter of this work, Balzac had desired to associate with him in his visit to the Great Mogul.

stepped in; and thus it came to pass, that instead of the gas shedding down its light on a *salle* filled with the author's friends and critics, who had power to make the piece a success, it chiefly illumined an undisciplined and noisy crew, who, by all sorts of bribery, misrepresentation, and corruption, had obtained the tickets from their original holders.

The two first acts passed coldly. The expected *claqueurs* and critics were nowhere. At the end of the third act, malevolence began to make itself heard, and felt. For a brief moment there arose a murmur of enthusiasm, but this murmur only roused antagonism, and malevolence hissed forth its spite. During the fourth act it burst forth in full force; and this was at the moment when Frederick Lemaître, the actor, came forward in the sup-

posed costume of a Mexican general, with a rainbow scarf round his body, a head-piece adorned by a bird of paradise, and speaking in a transatlantic accent. A terrible uproar now drowned the voices of the actors; it was impossible to hear a single word of their dialogue; and in the midst of this uproar some wag in the crowd discovered, or pretended that he discovered, an outrageous resemblance between the head-dress of "Vautrin" himself and King Louis Philippe. Then arose, as declares Léon Gozlan, who was present, "a fatal complication." Loud hissings pursued the piece, condemned from that moment to the end.

Frederick Lemaître exerted himself to the utmost to redeem his error and to rescue the piece from its doom, but that doom was inevitable.

Upon the 19th of March, 1840 (on the Thursday following the Saturday of "Vautrin's" representation), the Paris public was diverted from echoing words of condemnation by a letter which appeared in the "Presse" from the pen of the Vicomte de Launay (Madame de Girardin), of which letter the following is an abbreviated translation :—

"The subject of every conversation this week is the drama of M. de Balzac.

"'Well! What do *you* say of it?'

"'It is abominable!'

"'It is detestable!'

"'It is execrable!'

"'It is deplorable!'

"'It is pitiable!'

"'It is saddening!'

"'It is disgusting!'

"'It is revolting!'

"'Have you seen it?'

"'No.'

"'And you, Mädame?'

"'No, I was not able to get a box.'

"'And you, my little dear?'

"'I! oh, no; that night I was at the Opera.'

"'How do you know then that it was so frightful if you did not see this play?'

"'I read that it was so in my newspaper.'

"'Ah! voilà le grand mot! The newspapers have spoken ill of it. And you take their word for it? They have never lashed *you*. You do not guess why a man who has written a book against journalists is attacked by all the journals? Simple subscribers! You do not perceive perhaps that journals are made by journalists.

"Come, make an effort of intelligence; bring those two ideas together; they will explain many things, and now you will understand at length why every man of courage is outlawed by journals.

"Literary puritans, for some time past, have abused the word *art*, as political puritans formerly abused the word *country*. It is in the name of art that all injustice is committed, as once upon a time in the name of country all calumnies were forged, all vengeance was accomplished. In practice these two worships perfectly resemble each other: these great admirers of art have never done anything for art; those great adorers of their country had never done anything for their country. Their devotion only expresses itself by proscriptions; these persecute *artistes*, as those persecuted patriots. It is in the name of

art that a great poet is excluded from the Academy. It is in the name of art that certain fine pictures are excluded by the exhibition committee. It is in the name of art that daily journals inveigh against modern dramas. It is in the name of art that true art is sacrificed.

"And verily it would be better to say at once that you want no more dramas nor dramatists, since you condemn beforehand every subject of which dramatists can treat.

"If it be a work of imagination, you cry, 'What a confusion!' If it be a work of truth, you cry, 'What a scandal!' Thanks to you, it is no longer possible in modern art either to invent or to relate; you condemn, equally, that which never could have happened, and that which happened the day before; the superna-

tural and the historical! The fancy sketch and the portrait! Such a thing appears absurd to you, because it is a dream; such a thing seems frightful to you, because it is a remembrance. . . . . And then, you become of a delicacy, of a susceptibility, which enchants us. What! you suppress crime at the theatre; you wish to see only honest folks represented on the stage; assassins horrify you, galley-slaves irritate you, spies shock you. Spies! What a frightful idea! To put such a monster as a spy upon the stage! It is only M. de Balzac who could have such an idea.

"M. de Balzac and Racine before him; M. de Balzac and Schiller; for the latter has left the plan of a drama in which the police is the prime mover."

After this satire on a suspected system then in force, the 'Vicomte' continues:

"Some creations have over the characters of M. de Balzac the advantage of being classical, and that is all; but it is not the fault of modern authors if modern manners have no longer any poetry; the most skilful architect can but build with the materials which his country furnishes to him. In Italy, palaces are built of marble; in England, houses are built of bricks; in France, monuments are constructed of stone. Formerly, the most ordinary things were deified; all words were pompous; all fancies were fantastic; men habitually spoke in the language of gods; the most vulgar events were narrated in the most poetical manner; and now, quite the reverse; for it is the most ideal things that are expressed in the most vulgar words. Thus, formerly, a man who had to complain against fate, cried, 'Fa-

tality pursues me!' and saying this, he made grand gestures full of dignity. To-day the same man cries, striking his fist on the table, 'I am in ill luck,' with an oath which we confess is anything but tragical.

"Formerly Orestes, sustained by his friend Pylades, giving vent to horrible howlings, foaming with rage, his eyes wild, his features distorted, his arms convulsive, was an interesting personage, a victim of the hell of the heathens,—a victim pursued by the Furies. To-day, thanks to science, which does not cure him, Orestes, furious, is but a poor devil who tumbles down from a height, ill, and who is shut up in a hospital. Personages have not changed, crimes are the same; only they have lost the costume, and, above all, the language which served to disguise them. You pardon Phèdre for her fits of passion,

because she was the wife of Theseus and is named Phèdre; but were she named Madame la Baronne de Savigny, or Madame la Marquise de Morange, you would have no pity for her. Agamemnon, also, does well to be the king of kings, for that excellent father who sacrifices his daughter to his ambition, might certainly seem cruel to you, were he only Monsieur Dumont, the banker, (numero 221) and member of the general council of his department; for truly, though our political men to-day are very passionate, and stop at nothing to make their cause triumphant, yet, whatever may be the ardour of their ambition, we know not one of them capable of deliberately cutting his daughter's throat in order to raise the wind,—that is to say, obtain a favourable vote.

"Yours is a singular susceptibility! You are willing that people kill each other, but it must be with a poniard, and not with a knife! Ah! it is not the assassination that shocks you, but it is the instrument. The spy in a frock-coat appears odious to you; the spy in a mantle appears sublime to you. You desire to be regaled with poetry? Be it so. It is not we who will oppose ourselves to that desire; but then, permit either a new mythology to be invented, or resign yourselves to the truth."

Whilst the "Vicomte de Launay" was sharpening his sword wherewith thus to defend the cause of Balzac, Léon Gozlan went to see that discomfited dramatist at the Jardies on the day following the representation of "Vautrin." When he reached the Jardies, he found Balzac sauntering in the

grounds, and seemingly quite calm, but his face was much flushed; his hands were burning, and his words, though constrained, fell with none the less bitterness from his lips, which appeared swollen as after a night of high fever.

"My dear friend," said he to Gozlan, without giving him time to speak of the evening before,—"my dear friend, look at that ridge of ground which borders my property! do you see it,—there—the spot to which I now point—do you see it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Well," he continued, "I have a project of establishing a large dairy there,—a dairy which will supply the best milk possible to all the rich inhabitants of the country round who are in need of milk, situated as they are between Paris and

Versailles,—those two sponges which soak up everything. I shall have cows from Rambouillet, the most renowned, as you know, in all the world. All expenses paid, I am certain of a clear profit of three thousand francs a-year. Hem! What say you? . . . .

"And then, again," continued Balzac, pointing in another direction, "Look there, to our left; well, upon that ground, the aspect of which is that of Malaga, I am going to plant vines, as in the south.

"And then, again, there," pointing in another direction, "I shall rear vegetables, of a rare and superior sort, of which I possess all the seeds. . . . Now, calculate; three thousand francs for milk, three thousand francs for vegetables, twelve thousand francs for grapes."

"That, if I mistake not," said Gozlan, "makes eighteen thousand francs."

"You are not mistaken," continued Balzac; "but let me finish. Cast your eyes now upon that other point of the Jardies; measure the height and the breadth of that magnificent walnut-tree."

Now of all things Gozlan dreaded Balzac's walnut-tree. "You have told me about that a hundred times," gasped he.

But Balzac, standing with folded arms, in contemplation of its venerable form, was not to be defeated.

"I shall at least make two thousand francs income out of it," he said. "This," continued he, "is what I am reduced to, by the interdict of 'Vautrin.' My play is forbidden; but from my tree I shall still have an income of twenty thousand francs."

"'Vautrin' forbidden?" asked Gozlan.

And then did Balzac show Gozlan the ministerial letters which he had received just before his arrival, in which he was informed by the Government censor that henceforth the performances of his drama would be considered illegal, and that he, the author, would be amenable to the law should they be attempted.*

It need scarcely be said that at a time when Paris was talking of Balzac's drama and its defeat, all the peculiarities of that exceptional being were freely discussed;

* "It is well known," says Théophile Gautier, "that the dynastic and pyramidal *toupét*, with which the actor Frederick Lemaître had the fancy to adorn himself in his disguise as a Mexican general, drew down upon this work the severities of power; the prodigious profits which Balzac had expected to derive from the success of this drama all evaporated in smoke; but his disappointment did not hinder his magnanimous refusal to accept of an indemnity which was afterwards offered to him by the ministry."

but, amongst those who knew him most intimately, not one of his eccentricities caused so much surprise as did the fact of his occasional, unlooked-for, total disappearance from Paris. For weeks together he would be absent. The Jardies closely shut up, meantime, gave forth no signs of life. In his usual haunts Balzac was nowhere to be seen. The publishers, the journalists of Paris, could nowhere find him. "Balzac is gone again," was the *mot.*

Gone! But whither?

These disappearances first became remarkable in the year 1835, after the publication of "Le Médecin de Campagne," (the Country Doctor,) under whose guidance sanitary and intellectual progress went hand in hand; and whose best epitaph is to be found in the words of one of his patients: "Ah! although he hath

given all his goods to our poor country, and although we thus are all his heirs, yet in him have we lost our greatest wealth."

In the "Médecin de Campagne," Balzac —who, by his "Contes Drolatiques," had so shocked George Sand that he declared her a prude—Balzac, satirist of his age, shows the true dignity of self-abnegation, and elicits from the humblest things of earth great truths and solemn lessons.

Was it, like the melancholy Jacques, to read "good in everything" (out of Paris) that he went? What happy valley had he found? Nothing with literature had these disappearances to do; because, when he went into distant cities or into distant lands to look upon any object, or even to study one blade of grass, he would say to his *convives* and *confrères*, "To that country do I travel to behold that

blade of grass," &c.; but upon his return from this unknown land, Balzac, for a wonder, was dumb. Nor was it debt which carried him off;—for Balzac was so communicative as to his creditors, that by some they were regarded as mythical.

To George Sand was it accidentally revealed, soon after one of these returns, that Balzac had been into Russia, but not the reason why. They were dining together, side by side, in a large company, and Russia being mentioned, Balzac forthwith proclaimed to her the prodigies he had beheld in that country, which prodigies he declared were altogether in favour of absolute authority.

"In Russia," says George Sand, "was his ideal at that moment. He even, with seeming pleasure, described a ferocious scene of which he had there been witness;

but, after this anecdote he was seized with a fit of convulsive laughter. I whispered to him, 'The memory of that scene gives you a desire to weep, does it not?'

"He answered nothing, left off laughing as though a spring had suddenly snapped within him, was very serious all the rest of the evening, and said not another word about Russia."

Balzac's Russian revelations were not confined to Madame Sand, or the scandal of his having sold his pen to that Government would not have been set afloat. Presently, the true reason of his interest in the North will transpire; meanwhile, he had suffered much by "Vautrin's" rehearsal, and needed the change he sought.

What these rehearsals are to the dramatist may be guessed from Victor Hugo's experience in his play of "Hernani," in

which play (long ago) Mademoiselle Mars was to play the chief part of Doña Sol.

Victor Hugo had undertaken himself to read "Hernani" to Mademoiselle Mars. His manner, during this earlier period to which we now revert, was timid and retiring. Mademoiselle Mars, who was then fifty years of age, placed herself before him in an attitude worthy of the Queen of Tragedy, but with a box of sugar-plums in her hand, from which box she occasionally helped herself, whilst gazing at the ceiling, and preparing to criticize Victor Hugo.

At last he read :—

"Moi, je suis fille noble, et de ce sang, jalouse
Trop pour la *concubine* et trop peu pour l'épouse."

But Mademoiselle Mars corrected, "*Favorite!*" and having thus, as she thought, expunged the offensive word, she cracked a sugar-plum.

Again Victor Hugo read the passage as before, and again Mademoiselle Mars called out "*Favorite!*" and cracked another sugar-plum.

Again, and again. At length Victor Hugo looked up, paused, arranged his spectacles, and asked, "Is it you, Madame, who honour me by these interruptions?"

"C'est moi, Monsieur," replied Mademoiselle Mars, with great dignity. "Do you expect *me* to call myself by a word, sir, which is an unheard-of infringement on theatrical etiquette?"

"Then, Madame," said Hugo, "it will be the greater novelty."

"Possibly, Monsieur, but Doña Sol will never make way unless as the *favorite* she insinuates herself into the good graces of the public."

"We shall see, Madame."

A few days afterwards, the grand stage rehearsal of "Hernani" took place. The stage was lighted, but the audience was indistinct to the actors, owing to the gas not being turned on in the body of the theatre. The author, Victor Hugo, and a few select critics were seated in front of the stage on the first bench, usually occupied by the orchestra.

When the disputed passage was about to be uttered, Mademoiselle Mars approached the footlights; and, peering into the semi-darkness before her—"Monsieur Hugo! Monsieur Hugo!" cried she, "Are *you* there?"

"I am here," said a voice.

"Ah! pray do not disturb yourself, Monsieur Hugo, but do you still intend to crush the *favorite* under such a name as you have given her, M. Hugo?"

"Be so good, Madame, as to repeat the part as I have written it."

"I will be so good. But ah! how the public will hiss!"

"Let the public hiss, Madame."

And Mademoiselle Mars then retreating, declaimed to perfection,—

"Moi, je suis fille noble, et de ce sang, jalouse
Trop pour la *concubine* et trop peu pour l'épouse."

And the accent of scorn with which she gave utterance to the disputed word, enchanted the author, and eased her own conscience.

But presently she again came forward to the footlights :—

"M. Hugo, are you there ?"

"I am here."

"Then tell me why as Doña Sol I am to say to Hernani,—

"'Vous êtes mon *lion* superbe et généreux ?'"

"Because, madame, those are the words which I desire shall be said by Doña Sol to Hernani."

"But, *lion*, Monsieur! *Lion!* It seems so droll for me to call M. Firmin (who acts the part of Hernani) my lion."

"Ah, Madame; that is because, as Doña Sol, you do not forget Mademoiselle Mars."

"Monsieur, it would be easier for Doña Sol to say:—

"'Vous êtes mon Seigneur, superbe et généreux.'"

"Madame, I choose rather to be hissed for a good verse, than applauded for a bad one. *Mon seigneur* is tame!"

"Then, Monsieur, you hold to your lion? The public will not."

"Let the public take care of itself, madame," answered Hugo, bowing low;

"let me take care of my play, and do you take care of your part."

Thus by imperturbable coolness did Hugo triumph at rehearsals. But Balzac, with his excitable temperament, what must not he have suffered in presence of argumentative actresses and combative actors!

After two months and a half of the rehearsals of "Vautrin," Balzac was scarcely recognizable. No wonder he went to Russia, especially when, after all, "Vautrin" was laid on the shelf.

M. Harel—director of the Théâtre Porte St. Martin, where "Vautrin" appeared—was a man of wit. It was he who had the boldness to ask King Louis Philippe to lend him thirty thousand francs, to which request the king replied, "I would lend you this sum willingly, monsieur; but

I was just about to make the same request of you."

M. Harel's wit, which was exercised freely upon everybody and everything, helped to complicate Balzac's trials as a dramatist; for Balzac was not only most sensitive to ridicule, but much given to self-condemnation in his works, as all the printers of Paris at that time knew to their and to his cost. With Harel, therefore, who was ever ready to turn the sublime into the ridiculous, and with the actors, who were (of course) first discontented at the parts assigned to them, and afterwards criticised or inveighed against other parts which they had exchanged; and with the mechanists, full of difficulties about their business, &c. &c. Balzac was so troubled, that he whose

genius and cordiality were inexhaustible, even in trying to reconcile stage difficulties, grew visibly thin and aged during the period of rehearsal.

But to Harel all this, which was death and torment to Balzac, seems to have been a fine source of fiendish fun. Out upon the Boulevard of the Porte St. Martin, M. Harel would lean his back against a tree, and attract a crowd of loungers around him by entertaining them with Balzac's eccentricities; by recounting Balzac's last *mot*; by laughing at Balzac's last burst of enthusiasm in reciting some part of his own piece; and all this whilst regaling himself from time to time with a pinch of snuff from his gold snuff-box, which occasionally, with lofty condescension, he would hand to one or other of his listeners, tapping its lid with an air which seemed

to say, "All potentates, whether kings, actors, poets, authors, or dramatists, are subservient to me,—HAREL!"

And whilst the dandy wit Harel spoke and tapped the lid of his gold snuff-box, Balzac himself would pass beneath the trees of the Boulevard; Balzac with his pockets full of proof-sheets; Balzac, with his head full of thought; Balzac, with his heart full of anxiety; Balzac, unshorn, who had known no sleep all night, who had tasted no food all day; Balzac, with his square-cut, blue coat, dusty, and hanging loosely on him, and his large nut-coloured trousers, inky; Balzac, with his boots half unlaced, and his ungloved hands which, nevertheless, were the hands of a prelate—or of a king;* for Balzac,

* "But," declares Théophile Gautier, "nobody who saw Balzac in this poor accoutrement would

who had predicted that he would be a king, was royally regarded by the people. As journalist he was too generous, as dramatist he was too excitable, but as novelist let us follow him past Beau Harel and along the Boulevard, on one of the rehearsal days just named, when his disciple Léon Gozlan met him about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Ascertaining that his master had not yet broken his fast, Léon allured him towards the Café de Paris. But Balzac declined to enter that café; he declared

have presumed to mistake for a vulgar unknown that large man with eyes of flame, and dilating nostrils; that man, who, all illumined by his genius, passed by in his dream as though impelled by a whirlwind! At sight of him, even the jeers of *gamins* were hushed, and an attempted smile on the lips of serious men died out. The presence of one of the kings of Thought made itself felt."

he was not hungry, and protested that if he partook of any refreshment at all, it should only be a glass of water, and some macaroni cakes of a peculiar make, which cakes were to be found in no other place than at a remote *restaurant*. Together, therefore, did Balzac and Gozlan walk along the Boulevards; Balzac, quite forgetful of his fast, and even of the annoyances which he had just encountered in the rehearsal of "Vautrin;" for he had exploded with enthusiasm on the merits of Cooper the novelist, and especially descanted on some fine points of "Lake Ontario," a copy of which work he carried under his arm.

At last they reached the place where macaroni cakes were made, and Gozlan, thrusting some of these into Balzac's hands, was glad to see him throw down

the book on the counter and prepare to eat. But suddenly, just as he was going to put a cake into his mouth, he stopped short and pointing to the counter, asked Gozlan,—

"Do *you* know those books?"

"No, my dear Balzac," said Gozlan; "but eat."

A young English girl was serving behind the counter, and, hearing the name *Balzac*, she turned round abruptly, and, leaving a host of clamorous customers unserved, gazed upon the great author as if fascinated. Afterwards recovering herself, she proceeded with her duties, though only in an absent manner.

Balzac did eat. With the appetite of a man long fasting, and stimulated by the sight of food, he devoured macaroni cakes ravenously, though mean-

while raving, with his mouth full, of the book, and still pointing out to his disciple the merits of Cooper. At last, however, the cakes were all eaten, and Balzac, turning towards the English girl, asked her what was owing.

"Nothing, Monsieur *Balzac*," said she modestly, but resolutely.

Balzac looked at the girl with surprise, and reading in her countenance that she was determined not to let him pay for the cakes, "What shall I do?" asked he of Gozlan, turning towards him.

"Monsieur Balzac owes *me* nothing; I owe *him* much," said the girl.

Suddenly, a thought struck Balzac. He took up the English romance from the counter, and offering the volume to the young English girl behind it, "Mademoiselle," said he, "more than ever do

I regret not to have been the author of this work."

She blushed and accepted it.

But Balzac soon after this disappeared again.

In Paris, he held aloof more than did many of his confraternity from politics. Realist as he was, he had not so much faith, it would seem, as others had, in an ideal future. But, now that "Vautrin" was proscribed, whither had Balzac really carried his genius and his grievance? The latter cast suspicion on the former; would it, in short, be more impossible for this author who laid claims to the gifts of "Avatar," to identify himself with despotism than with democracy?

CHAPTER XII.

LOUIS BLANC — GEORGE SAND — CHOPIN — SAINTE BEUVE — LAMARTINE — THÉOPHILE GAUTIER — M. ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN — MADAME ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN — VICTOR HUGO — BALZAC.

Louis Blanc — George Sand's home in Paris — Her children — Her guests — Her Retreat — George Sand and Louis Blanc — Literary politicians — The horizon darkens — M. de Girardin on Socialism — Victor Hugo at the Tuileries — Peer and Poet — First rumours of "Les Misérables" — The Countess Von Hanska — "Séraphita" — "Séraphitus" — Memories — Sibyl of Auteuil — Revolution of 1848 — Lamartine and the Duchesse d'Orléans — Lamartine and Louis Blanc — The "Vicomte de Launay" on the Republic — M. de Girardin's arrest — His Letters to his wife — Her conduct — Her address to Frenchmen — Work to the last — Farewell interview with George Sand — Lamartine — Balzac's death — Balzac's funeral — Balzac's Elegy.

THE interdiction of "Vautrin" was a sign of the times; a small sign indeed, compared with evidences of agitation which now were daily increasing in France, but the great causes from whence these proceeded are historical; and politics are only here alluded to as immediately affecting that pleiad of poets who sought in their solution to find, or to found, a glorious Utopia. Of a future for the happiness of humanity at large, did genius in France now dream, and by that dream were evoked men whose greatest fame was yet to come.

Chief amongst these was Louis Blanc. Who was Louis Blanc? From uncontradicted tradition, it appears that he, the son of an inspector of finance, was born at Madrid in 1813; and that his mother, Corsican by birth, was the sister of Count Pozzo di Borgo, the enemy of Napoleon I. a relationship of which his enemies have not been slow to accuse Louis Blanc. As if one were responsible for one's uncles!*

* As a nephew of Pozzo di Borgo, Louis Blanc, it is said, was presented to the Duchesse de Dino, the celebrated female politician, and presiding genius of the Hôtel Talleyrand.

The Duchesse smiled when she beheld this youth of ruddy countenance, and of small stature, bowing with his hand on his heart before her; and, treating him as a child, she tapped his cheek with her fan and asked him, "What dost thou want of me?"

"A vocation," was the reply.

"Name it," said she, amused.

Soon after the Restoration, the father of Louis Blanc received a pension, and two purses for the education of his sons at the college of Rhodez. Louis had just finished his studies there when the revolution of 1830 took place.

This revolution possibly excited the youthful ardour of Louis Blanc in favour of

"Diplomacy," he answered.

"Oh!" she cried, and, laughing merrily, she tapped both his cheeks with her fan and called him "Don Cherub!"

He drew back half pleased, half offended, at the freedom of this great lady towards him, and then she added with a wave of her hand, which gave him to understand that the audience was over:—

"Before entering on thy noviciate in diplomacy, Don Cherub, thou must wait for thy wisdom teeth."

Louis Blanc rushed forth from the gates of the Hôtel Talleyrand gnashing his teeth against diplomacy, which had appeared to him in the guise of an impertinent fine lady; who, whatever her policy, was in *politesse* wanting.

liberty, but it was the ruin of his father. With the fall of the elder branch of the royal family, he lost his pension, and henceforth his sons were dependent on their own talents and industry for subsistence.

Louis Blanc, now thrown on his own exertions for support, was subsequently engaged as tutor to a rich man's son at Arras, where he remained for nearly two years; during which time he received a crown of laurel from the Academicians of Arras for two poems of which he was the author. Encouraged by this triumph, he now turned his eyes towards literature and journalism; he returned to Paris in, or about, 1834, and was not long before he was engaged as a regular contributor to a democratic newspaper, called "Le bon Sens."

In 1835, he became also a writer in the

"Revue Républicaine," where one of his articles which excited public attention was on "Virtue considered as a means of government;" and it was about this time that he reprinted his Essay on Mirabeau which, originally in the form of a poem, had helped to win laurels for him at Arras.

In 1838, he created the "Revue du Progrès politique, social et littéraire;" and then, in another year, came forth his work, "De l'Organisation du Travail." In this work, the great social scheme for which its author is notorious, was in theory developed.

Henceforth Louis Blanc belonged to humanity at large. Towards him eyes from far and near began to turn; many expressive of hope; some, of fear. 'A chacun selon ses forces; à chacun selon ses besoins.' Few in this world of weak-

ness and of want, could fail to find a hope for themselves in such a motto! Louis Blanc was now popular as an apostle of progress, and therefore, as a matter of course, he had powerful enemies; especially when he declared that misery, not man himself, was the cause of social crimes, of social evils; and, thus declaring, in consequence demanded that labour should be organized so as to suppress misery, and thereby to disarm assassins and robbers; to strike shackles off slavery, and to open a path to repentance for the Magdalene.

Upon these, as upon other subjects, he expresses himself with a fiery eloquence, of which but a faint idea can be formed until hearing him converse. Well does the author of these pages remember once beholding Louis Blanc opposed in argument to a phlegmatic Briton; and how,

even though the chances of language and of prejudice were against him, his words and looks were sufficient to rouse up even polite London society from its orthodox calm to enthusiasm.

It was this same eloquence of lip and eye which stimulated his countrymen and countrywomen at the date to which this narrative has now reached; when Balzac, Monsieur and Madame Émile de Girardin, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Lamennais,—all those celebrated men and women at whose separate lives we have glanced, were electrified more or less by theories through the medium of Louis Blanc, which at other times and from other men might have appeared impracticable. Though small of stature, Louis Blanc is a giant in intellect, and in his presence one sees and feels but his strength.

George Sand was now in Paris. Her son Maurice (an artist studying under Delacroix), had fulfilled his pledge made to her years before at Chamounix; he was the consoler of his mother. Under her care he had grown vigorous in health and strength; and Solange was proceeding with her education in Paris. For the sake, therefore, of both her children, Madame Sand took up her abode in the Rue Pigale, and afterwards in the Place D'Orléans, where Louis Blanc was her frequent guest, as also Godefroy Cavaignac,* and many other political, literary, and artistic celebrities, conspicuous amongst whom was Chopin. Literature, art, and even politics, found in his music an eloquent interpreter.

* The *salon* of Madame Sand proved, as did the

For years past, Chopin, the great composer, had sought inspiration for his harmonious discords in the presence of "Lélia." Eccentric, fastidious, of nervous organization so intense as to preclude the possibility of physical health; constantly alternating between extreme exaltation and depression, he had followed that Sibyl of Romance when travelling with

circle of Madame de Girardin, that the 'Romantisme,' which dates its development from the Revolution of 1830, was now the head of political opposition;—showing, thereby, says a contemporary observer (whose 'Etudes' are not published in France), that literature and politics are in Paris inseparable. Would, however, that this observer's subsequent remarks on causes and effects had been prophetic!

"Quand la même nation a abusé en si peu de temps de la liberté, du despotisme, de la religion, du sentiment, de la poésie, de tout enfin ce qui peut émouvoir les masses, que doit-il lui rester de son idéal?

"A ces désillusions vient se joindre la peur qu'on

her children, and had found rest in her intellectual sympathy. Beneath the roof of Madame Sand, a chosen few would press round Chopin, and importune the exercise of his marvellous gift; and, in response, he would surprise them in more ways than one. "It was then," says Madame Sand, "that after having plunged his audience into sad memories or mournful

a des idées générales depuis la révolution de quarante-huit. Depuis qu'on a vu les théories socialistes tendre à s'établir dans la pratique, on s'est défié de la pensée. On s'est réfugié dans la science aride ou dans la littérature frivole, comme dans un port bien abrité ou les vents de la mer ne pénètrent pas. On en est venu jusqu'à renier et à maudire le journalisme et le parlementarisme, ces deux colonnes de la liberté moderne, ces deux conquêtes de la Révolution, dont la France devait être fière. 'Savez-vous,' disait M. de Montalembert aux hommes de 48: 'Savez-vous quel est votre plus grand crime? C'est d'avoir désenchanté la France de la liberté!"'

melancholy (for his music, especially when improvised, overwhelmed the soul with gloom), he would suddenly, as though to escape and to let others escape from the depression he had shed around him, burst forth into a brilliant Mazourka, or, starting up from the pianoforte and turning towards a mirror, he would, unseen and in a moment, so arrange his hair, his cravat, that, when he turned round, he was transformed into an impassive Englishman, or an impertinent old man, or a sentimental Englishwoman, or a sordid Jew . . . but beneath all these types and caricatures, there was ever something of sadness. Reared by the indulgent care of princesses, Chopin was at once the centre star, and the spoilt child of society . . He abounded in magnificent inconsistencies, which, nevertheless, had their own peculiar logic.

By principle, he was modest; and by habit, gentle; but by instinct he was imperious, sensitive, and full of a legitimate pride, of which he himself was unconscious."

The times had changed without, the times had changed within, the home of Madame Sand. No longer, as years before, is she struggling for a subsistence for herself and her daughter in an obscure lodging on the Quai St. Michel; whither her son was wont to go from the College Henri IV., to spend the day with her, and, having been fed and clothed by her loving hands, would sit before her little writing-table, drawing on paper, and dreading to hear the clock strike as the hour approached for his return.

Long since was she rescued for ever from obscurity; and now she has become the centre of a circle in which poetry,

politics, music, are united in the worship of her fame.

But does this worship suffice for woman's happiness?

Speaking of this later period of her life, Madame Sand tells us how, one day, when at Nohant, she wandered away from the brilliant companions who had followed her there, and sought a refuge in that spot, where, as a child, she, long ago, beneath the trees, built fairy grottoes with her mother.

She went to weep in the favourite retreat of her childhood at Nohant. She was now about forty years of age, and she felt herself physically stronger than in her youth. Suddenly, in the midst of profound depression and gloomy ideas, a fancy possessed her to raise an enormous stone which had fallen from some rockwork

built there when she was a child. Without the least effort did she raise this stone, and then with despair did she let it fall again, exclaiming, with a feeling of human desolation, "Ah! God! I have yet, perhaps, another forty years to live."

Again, speaking of this same time, she declares: "My life, always active and smiling on the surface, had internally become more painful than ever. . . . From my son did my true strength come to me. He was now of an age to share the most serious interests of life with me, and he sustained me by his even serenity of soul, by his precocious reason, and by his unalterable cheerfulness."

But not even yet had George Sand found the solution to the problem of life, and from the summit to which she had now attained she looked not exclusively

to heaven for that solution, but still dreamed that it might be found amidst the turmoil of the world at her feet.

During the course of this narrative it has been faintly shown how those with whom she was brought into contact by fate, led her inevitably towards the gulf of politics. In vain had she tried to fly from Éverard; the times and its leaders were too mighty for her.

Of politics she had said, "*I will not drink that water*," but she was forced by fate to do so.

Even the critical Sainte-Beuve led her on towards those "restless and bitter waves" with which, eventually, she mingled her inner life. By his advice had "Lélia" first been published, although it is none the less true that he jested agreeably on all things—supporting in the meanwhile

some of the dark and earnest doctrines of Lamennais.

The great critic still smiled, but none the less important were his words when speaking to George Sand of that sudden excitement which had operated on minds the most opposite, and which blended them, "as though all the circles of Dante were crushed into one."

"A dinner at which Listz (the composer) had brought together M. Lamennais, M. Ballanche, the singer Nourrit, and myself," says George Sand, "appeared to Sainte Beuve the most fantastic thing imaginable. He asked me what these five persons (two politicians, two musicians, and one authoress) could possibly say to each other. I replied to him that I knew nothing of the conversation, for M. Lamennais had talked with M. Ballanche, Listz

with Nourrit, and I with the cat of the house."

And yet, when George Sand read the following page from Louis Blanc, it seemed, she declares, as though written on purpose for her: "Short-sighted politicians alarm themselves at the ardour of societies. They are right; strength is needed to govern strength. And that is why mediocre statesmen apply themselves to enervate a people. They reduce it according to their own proportions, because otherwise they could not drive it.

"But it is not thus that men of genius act. Such men do not study how to extinguish the passions of a great people, for they know that numbness is the last symptom of a society which is about to expire."

Now, here again behold the duality of

George Sand! She, the woman to whom Michel de Bourges had said, "I know that the evil of thy intelligence comes from some great pain in thy heart," became, nevertheless, a masculine journalist; nay, her genius was great, indeed, if measured by the rule just now laid down by Louis Blanc, for George Sand was potent in stimulating the political passions of her countrymen.

But, even though thus inflaming the minds of others, this genius still suffered from profound self-discouragement. Utopian politician though she was, yet did George Sand possess then, as now, a fund of common sense, which not even the storms of the time could overwhelm or overcome.

"Art thou not," she wrote in her "Lettres d'un Voyageur",—"Art thou not

indignant, as I am, at this exorbitant number of redeemers and legislators who pretend to the throne of the moral world? . . . All the world doth desire to teach . . . . The heart and soul seek in vain for a ray of light and heat. Truth, misunderstood and discouraged, turns giddy or seeks to hide itself in souls worthy to receive it. . . All the elements of force and of activity march in disorder."

But, whilst Idealism, in the form of George Sand, was thus alternately elated and dejected in the revolutionary combat of the pen, the Realist, Balzac, had long since, by its aid, laid bare, as he had declared that he would do, the secret springs of the social machine, which he displayed in the hideous strength of its resistless motion. In the mirror of social evils held up by Realist writers, was foreshadowed

the coming and inevitable strife in behalf of social regeneration.

And Balzac's friend, Madame de Girardin (under the pseudonym of the "Vicomte de Launay"), declares, in July 1847, "Already do doleful voices give utterance to fatal words. Phrases, cant of custom, consecrated set forms, presages of stormy days, are everywhere heard:—

"The horizon darkens!

"The danger is imminent!

"A crisis is inevitable!

"A *fête* upon a volcano!

"We are upon the the eve of great events!

"All this can end but by a revolution!

"Some say we are in 1830!

"Others say we are in 1790!

"Then philosophers declare: 'The *ultra bourgeois* will lose the royalty of

July as the *ultra gentilshommes* lost the royalty of the Restoration.'

"Eh! Messieurs! it is neither citizens nor gentlemen who lose royalties, but kings themselves!

"But the great misfortune of our time is that all our ambitious men love power for itself alone. To love work for itself, that is noble; to love art for itself, that is grand; to love sacrifice for itself, that is sublime. But power, that is shameful! . . . Oh, delirium of power in niggardly ambitions!

"To vegetate as a minister, and to exist from day to day is that which is hideous in hebetude . . . Meanwhile, when the coming revolution is not talked about, marriages and banquets make up the sum of conversation.

"In the fashionable world people marry. In the political world people

dine. Already have men dined for electoral reform. Soon they will dine for commercial liberty; before the end of the year all sorts of questions will be eaten. A strange way this to ripen ideas!

"As one of our friends, a young thinker, who lives in France to-day, affirms, 'There are now but two divinities—two sacred calves,—the golden calf, and the frozen calf. The golden calf is Fortune; the frozen calf is Popularity. Those who ruin the country,' says he, 'sacrifice to the golden calf. Those who flatter the people sacrifice to the frozen calf. Those who make poems to a man's fortune sacrifice to the golden calf. Those who make romances to please the *bourgeoisie* sacrifice to the frozen calf. There are even some very cunning folks who find the means of sacrificing at the same time to both these calves.'"

And whilst Madame de Girardin thus satirized the signs of the times, her husband exercised an increasingly powerful influence on them. It was not for him, as an oracular journalist, to gossip of great things in the *salons* of his wife, but she, his *confidante*, meditated on mighty tidings in her solitude, and sometimes, when not sceptical of her hearers, she alluded to events which cast their shadows before them.

Madame Sand was much impressed by the writings of Monsieur Émile de Girardin, though less so than with those of Louis Blanc. She eloquently defends the former in the duel he had fatally fought with a brother-journalist, and now she says :—

" I have found in the Socialist labours of M. Émile de Girardin, so strong a demonstration of the right of individual

liberty, that I desire to seek still further to what consequences it would lead . . . With time, and by the collective work of superior minds, questions are developed, and that work is always collective in spite of apparent contrarieties (*divergences*). It needs but patience, and light comes of itself. That which most retards it is the proud ardour with which we all, in this world, take part for one or other of the forms of truth.

"It is good that we have this ardour, but it is good also that at certain hours we have the faith to say, *I know not.*"

But, nevertheless, George Sand declares, "I have not, unreservedly, admitted to myself the doctrine of absolute liberty."

Subjects such as this were now becoming of an interest more and more absorbing to each of those men and wo-

men whose lives and opinions sketched herein were now by political circumstances daily more closely interwoven with each other.

One of these men had not only ready access to the King, but had persuaded him to an action which, for the moment, made Louis Philippe popular. This man was Victor Hugo.

To explain this action, we must remind our readers that, in the year 1839, Barbès, the political offender, was condemned to the scaffold. The sister of Barbès sought out Victor Hugo, whose ear was never deaf to misfortune, and implored him to supplicate the King for her brother's pardon.

Victor Hugo did so. In vain.

Marie of Wurtemberg, that gifted princess, beloved by France and by the

King, was just dead, and the Count de Paris was just born.

Taking these two circumstances into consideration, Victor Hugo determined once more to implore the King's clemency in behalf of Barbès; and accordingly, at midnight, on the 12th of July, he went to the Tuileries.

His Majesty had retired to rest, but upon a table where he could not fail to see it in the morning, Victor Hugo left the following stanza:—

"Par votre ange envolée ainsi qu'une colombe!
Par ce royal enfant, doux et frêle roseau!
Grâce encore une fois! Grace au nom de la tombe!
Grace au nom du berceau!"

The King read these lines, and by subsequent clemency, did his majesty momentarily lull—thanks to the poet—the excitement of popular feeling.

The Duc d'Orléans had been intimately allied with Victor Hugo, so that when the *cheminée* was extinguished, as we have seen, that poet of the people, and Peer of France, may be said to have been the interpreter between the heir to the throne and men of letters.

But through life, and under every fresh circumstance of life, whether of elevation or of depression, Victor Hugo, as man or Peer, court favourite or exile, has dedicated himself to the poor, and to the service of those less fortunate, or more unfortunate, than himself.

Looking down from his pedestal of fame and rank upon social griefs and upon human miseries, he was, many years since, inspired to write that work which has latterly been received in England, and reprobated in France.

"Les Misérables" is a work of time and deep reflection during many vicissitudes in the life of its author, and the history of his country.

Years since, even before his exile, such a work was whispered amongst his own confraternity in Paris, as being meditated by him under the title of "Les Misères."

Nor was Balzac behind Hugo in philanthropy; witness his "Médecin de Campagne," which work not only shows the wants of humanity, but the power of even one man, endowed with means and will, to relieve those wants.

In this work the genius of Balzac prostrates itself before an Ideal of practical self-abnegation, and is sublimated by meditations on some mysteries of Catholicism, and on the sacramental sacredness

of domestic life. Not only to suffering humanity, but to pure hearts and refined minds, the "Médecin de Campagne" was welcome. Of marriage Balzac here speaks with especial reverence; and his own marriage, by which, at last, his life was blest, his happiness secured, his fame crowned, is said to have originated in this work, where the author, fatigued, as it would seem, by the portraiture of artificial society, and weary of its dull depravities, shows the beauty of life if man be only true to the noble simplicity of his heaven-born instincts.

The "Médecin de Campagne," as just hinted, leads us to a very delicate page in Balzac's life, and especially as he was sensitive lest that page should be sullied by profane eyes. Indeed, so reverent was he of the very name of his future bride, that

her existence was long unsuspected by even his most intimate friends; but, from what has since transpired, it seems that, in the year 1835, a literary correspondence was established between Balzac and a lady whose rank was one of her least claims to respect. The lady was the Countess Eveline von Hanska, who had then just read the work above named, in which not only the genius, but the intrinsic worth of its author, was revealed to her.

At a later date Balzac visited Polish Russia, and there (at Wierschownia, near Berdidcheff)* did he behold the lady

* In one of his journeys, Balzac's mode of paying the postilions, was characteristic and original. "I did not know a word of the language of the country," says he, "nor did I know the value of its current coin, but I do know the human heart, which is the same

whose appreciation was one of his highest triumphs. Henceforth, it became Balzac's great privilege to visit Northern regions, whither he fled, as we have seen, to a haven of rest, holding the love enshrined there too sacred for Paris gossip. In this love and this reverence consisted the mystery of Balzac's frequent absence from France.

But no efforts of his pen could satisfy Balzac as worthy of his betrothed wife;

in all countries, and I understand physiognomy; so this is what I did:—I had a bag which I filled with small silver money, and each time that the horses were to be changed I took this bag in my hand; the postilion then came to the door of the carriage; I looked searchingly into his eyes whilst I dropped into his hand one coin—two coins—then three,—four, or ever so many, until at last I saw him smile. Now as soon as I saw him smile, I understood that I had given him a coin too many. Quickly I withdrew that coin, and my man was paid."

and in proof of this it is declared that the corrections of "Pierrette"—dedicated to her—were so costly that they far exceeded the profits of that popular work. To the Countess von Hanska, also, is attributed the inspiration under which Balzac wrote "Séraphita, Séraphitus."

"Never," as Théophile Gautier says, "did Balzac embrace ideal beauty more closely than in this work; the ascension up the mountain has something in it ethereal, supernatural, luminous, which raises one from earth. The only two colours employed are celestial blue and snow-white, with some mother-of-pearl tints for shade . . . The panorama of Norway, defined by its shores, and seen from this elevation, dazzles the reader and makes him dizzy, as though he were actually looking down from a great height."

In the panorama of Norway, Balzac resumes those metaphysical problems with which, when a child, Swedenborg, the Northern seer, is said to have held him spell-bound before heaven and hell.

But, though still delighting in mysticism, and believing himself even to possess magnetic power, though living in the midst of theories which were declared to be heretical in their tendency, though beholding in social reformers an epidemic tendency to self-exaltation, Balzac declared: — "Society cannot live by moral ideas only; to subsist it has need of actions in harmony with those ideas. . . . Religion, and certainly worship, or otherwise said, established religion, constitutes the sole force which can bind Society together. . . . In my opinion marriage, the birth of children, the death of parents, cannot

be surrounded by too much ceremony. That which has secured the strength of Catholicism and fast rooted it amongst us, is the splendour with which it is manifest in the most serious events of life. . . . The priest, by virtue of his lofty mission, knows how to accord his office with the sublimity of Christian morality. . . ."

And again this Realist writes:—"I have inhaled the balm by which religion soothes the wounds of life."

The life of Balzac had been a battle-field; his wounds were many; but now the dream of his dreary days and lonely nights in the garret was realised. Soft hands touched him, and a soft voice whispered to him, "Thou hast suffered much, my angel!"

Balzac, nearly fifty years of age, "is troubled," according to his own description

of first love in youth, "by a sentiment of modesty. He fears to express his love badly; he sees only difficulties which alarm him; he trembles lest he may not please. The more he feels the value of happiness the less he believes that his mistress will readily grant it to him . . . His idol is imposing; he adores her in secret, and from afar . . . What man," he asks, "has not many of these virgin memories, which at a later period renew themselves, bearing the impress of a perfect happiness? Memories, like unto those children lost in the flower of their age of whom the parents have known but the smiles."

For the reception of his bride, Balzac had taken a house in the Rue Fortunée (since called Rue de Balzac), in the Champs Elysées, an address so full of

promise that it reminds one of his superstition in the choice of names. The house was as yet closed against all visitors; none of Balzac's friends were permitted to cross its threshold; but, notwithstanding this interdict, public curiosity had so far satisfied itself as to declare that the dwelling, closely screened by a wall, like a gem in a casket, was already converted into a museum of art and a treasury of taste.

Balzac's friendship for Madame de Girardin was not diminished by his love for Madame von Hanska. In the former he is said alone to have confided the hopes which now animated him.

But, alas! "When the house is finished, Death enters." This proverb is not only Parisian, if, as some declare, it has urged Eastern sultans perpetually to rebuild

palaces. Balzac was Oriental in some of his superstitions, but not, as the case lies before us, in this. Neither in the fact of having his likeness taken. Elsewhere, in these pages, we have contemplated Balzac's pen-and-ink portrait of himself in "Albert Savarus;" but, when sitting to David d'Angers for his bust, this great Realist of Romance cried out, "Take care of my nose; my nose is a world." To explain this we must here put a finishing-touch to his former portrait by showing that his nose, "carré du bout, partagé en deux lobes," had open nostrils breathing, like a war-steed's, fiery power.

This bust was destined to surmount Balzac's tomb. But, if already, as some suppose, his health was undermined by long-continued labour, he showed no symptoms of illness, although he was

doubly excited by the new-born joy so long deferred of his inner life, and by the signs of the times in the outer world.

According to the predictions of Lamennais, the thrones of Europe were now about to be shaken. Where first would the lightning strike? Who would be overwhelmed? From what quarter would be heard the song of deliverance?

Balzac, so long poor, and unknown, and friendless, whose human sympathies were altogether with human suffering, — Balzac, now trembling at the coming advent of his own happiness, and possibly, as just said, unnerved by physical ailment, became feverish as to fate. Studying all subjects in their turn, and making himself more or less master of all knowledge, he had lately been occupied by occult science; and at last he determined on seeking a

fortune-teller, who was said to surpass Mademoiselle Lenormand herself, in her power of foretelling events.

It is notorious how, in times of public epidemic doubt and terror, Superstition usually surges upwards in proportion as Faith is overwhelmed. Paris was just now credulous. Not least so politicians and philosophers. But, as poetess, Madame de Girardin, may be excused for joining Balzac, the *romancier*, and Théophile Gautier, his disciple, in pursuit of the marvellous.

It is Théophile Gautier who tells us :—

"The pythoness resided at Auteuil; we knew not in what street, but that mattered little, for the address given to us was false.

"We fell into the midst of a family of honest citizens *en villégiature;* the husband, the wife, and an old grandmother, to whom Balzac, blindly bewitched by his

fact, obstinately persisted in attributing the air of an enchantress. This venerable woman, little flattered at being taken for a witch, gave harsh tokens of being a shrew; the husband suspected that we were either quizzes or pickpockets; the young woman gave vent to peals of laughter; and the maid-servant proceeded to lock up all the plate, as a matter of prudence. Our retreat became imperative; but Balzac still maintained that the pythoness was there; and, safe in the carriage, he burst forth at the beldame for her obstinate caprice. '*Stryge*, *harpie*, *magicienne*, *empouse*, *larve*, *lamie*, *lémure*, *goule*, *psylle*, *aspiole!*' he cried, with all other epithets that the litanies of Rabelais could suggest to him. I said to him, 'Well, *if* she be a sorceress, she is clever in concealing her game —' 'Of cards,' added Madame de Girardin with that

quickness of wit which never failed her. We searched for the sibyl still further, but found her not; and then Madame de Girardin, to relieve the discomfiture of Balzac, pretended that he had only devised this *ressource de Quinola*, to get himself taken in a carriage to Auteuil, where he had other business, and to secure to himself pleasant companions on the road."

Théophile Gautier, however, believes that afterwards Balzac alone did ferret out the sorceress, for in one of his subsequent works he represents her, with seeming reality — frightful though fantastic — between her hen, Bilouche, and her toad, Astaroth.

The storm burst at last in the Revolution of 1848. That event itself is still

too vivid in the memory of many to need recalling here.

Its history has been written, and is now being written, by the circumstances which, resulting from it, form the history of our own time.

And only by posterity, to whom the whole consequences of that event will be revealed, can its history as a whole be recorded.

The Revolution of 1848 is merely alluded to here as an incident in the lives before us. In the political life of Lamartine it was the great event. To him was the homage of the people rendered. In 1778, Voltaire had blest Dr. Franklin's grandson in the name of "God and Liberty;" in 1848, the cry was "God and Lamartine." *

* This cry was popular even in the *salons* of

In the political life, also, of Louis Blanc was this revolution the great event; but more conspicuously does Lamartine stand forth here, because to him, as before said, when the King had fled, and when the palace of the Tuileries was ransacked, it was reserved to rescue the Duchesse d'Orléans, whose society he hitherto had shunned, as we have seen, fearing that its charms would allure him from his political integrity.

"But from afar," says he of himself, "I had admired the widow of the Duc d'Orléans; a foreigner, exiled, crushed out of her true position of mother by a jealous

the Republic of 1848. One night one of the prettiest women in Paris presented herself before Lamartine, and begged to kiss his hand, exclaiming, "'*Dieu et Liberté*,' said Voltaire to Franklin; but I say, '*Dieu et Lamartine!*'"

and cruel law. Alone at the Tuileries, between a tomb and a throne, she derived from happiness but mourning; from royalty but a perspective view; from maternity but cares. She was in every way equal to her destiny; by beauty, by the soul, by tears. Her countenance revealed all those mysteries. Her beauty contained her thought . . . . Was she not a queen in men's imagination? The moment was come to realize that dream. To that end it needed but to utter at the tribune the cry which was at the bottom of all hearts." Impelled by gestures and voices, Lamartine was the arbitrator of fortune; the rather austere impartiality which he had hitherto shown, gave to his decision an authority which would influence others to follow his example. The presence of the Duchesse, her paleness, her children pressed to her heart,

her imploring look, were more than half of eloquence essential to subdue an assembly of feeling men.

Never had an orator such clients behind him. The French people is soon rendered docile by tears. Lamartine had but to say to the princess and to her sons: "Rise! You are the widow of that Duke of Orléans, whose virtues and whose memory the people crown in you! You are the children deprived of their father, and adopted by the nation! You are the innocents, and the victims of the throne's faults, the guests, and the supplicants of the people! You save yourselves from the throne in a revolution! That revolution is just, it is generous, it is patriotic! It does not combat women and children; it does not disinherit widows and orphans; it despoils not its prisoners and its guests!

Go, reign! By compassion it restores to you the throne lost by the faults of which you are but the victims. The ministers of your ancestor have dilapidated your inheritance; the people restore it to you, it adopts you, it will itself be your ancestor. You had but a prince for a tutor, you shall have a mother and a nation!

"Lamartine had these words on his lips, this gesture in his hand, this act in his imagination, and tears in his eyes. He did not yield to these noble temptations, he tore his heart from his breast. It would have been easy, it would have been sweet to have shed upon that tribune the tears which were in his eyes, as in all others. But those tears would have become torrents of citizens' blood. He restrained them. Those tears would have been fatal not only to the republic, but even to the

victims of the catastrophe, whom in crowning he would have doomed."

"Louis Blanc!" continues Lamartine, "his name was then immensely popular . . . . it represented the double prestige of extreme political reform and of Socialist doctrines. Louis Blanc and his friends preached neither wrath nor blood to this people. In their mouths, their doctrines and their words were doctrines and words of peace. Louis Blanc strove with an eloquence full of metaphor, but cold as all ideal eloquence must be, to disarm men by dazzling their imaginations. He was admired, applauded, rather than obeyed; his little figure was engulphed in the crowd; the people were astonished by that strong voice, and by those grand gestures, proceeding from so weak a body. But by an irresistible instinct the mob always

confounds with the stature of an orator the strength of his character and the greatness of his ideas. The sensual people measures men with its eyes. Disorder increased. The insurrection was aggravated."

On the 13th of May, 1848, the "Vicomte de Launay" resumes:—

"Sad! sad! That which ought to be sublime becomes frightful!

"A loyal republic, is it not the dream of all generous and independent minds? And, suddenly, enthusiasm is changed to fear, the golden dream has ended in nightmare, and disenchanted tremblers say to us:—

"'Your fine hope, alas! was but a chimera, your beautiful republic is impossible!'

"'No, no, three times no; it is not

impossible; nothing, on the contrary, would be easier than to make the republic great and beautiful.'.

"'And how then?'

"'By understanding it.'

"But, alas! those who have proclaimed it do not understand it! And the proof that they do not understand it is that they have not made it loved; it is that they render it ridiculous, niggardly, vain, instead of making it powerful, serious, and dignified. It is that they make of it a monarchical parody. It is, for example, that at each of their movements they make the cannon roar. The cannon is a king's plaything, which is not suitable to the calm and popular idea involved in a republic. The proof that they do not understand the republic is that they desire to lodge it at the Tuileries. The proof that

they do not understand the republic is, that in their fine promises of universal enfranchisement they have forgotten the women.

"Oh! Frenchmen . . . . envious of your wives whom you pretend to adore! Inventors of the Salic Law! Twenty ages have not changed you; the most abject wretch, if his imbecility have the honour to be masculine, counts in your eyes as more than a noble woman endowed with a great mind. Thus the stupid Jocrisse, groom of M. de B——, who said to his master on the eve of the elections; 'Monsieur, pray give me a list. For I have a vote, and I don't know what to do with it.'

"This stableman a voter!

"And the author of 'Indiana,' of 'Valentine,' of 'Lélia,' of 'Spiridion,' of

'Consuelo,' and of so many *chefs d'œuvre*—George Sand—O deputies, too proud of your masculine obscurity!—George Sand has not the right to trace on a bulletin with her immortal pen, a single one of your unknown names!"

George Sand, after taking refuge at Nohant at this time, says:—

"In the month of June, after those execrable days which had just killed the republic by arming its children one against another, and by digging between the two forces of the revolution,—the people and the *bourgeoisie*,—an abyss which twenty years will not perhaps suffice to fill up—I was at Nohant, much menaced by cowardly hatreds, and by the imbecile terrors of the province. I no longer cared as to that which had been personal to me

in public events. My soul was dead, my hopes were crushed beneath the barricades.

"O Louis Blanc! The labour of your life is that which we all should have ever present before us. In the midst of days of crisis which make of you an outlaw and a martyr, you seek in the history of mankind of our epoch, the mind and the will of Providence.

"And you also, Lamartine; although according to our views, you may be too much inclined towards civilizations which have had their time, yet by the charm and by the abundance of your genius, do you scatter flowers of civilization upon our future."

Upon the 25th of June, about six o'clock in the evening, Madame Émile de Girardin received the following note from her husband:—

"My dear love, I am arrested, and conducted to the *Conciergerie*. Ask for a pass.

"E. DE GIRARDIN."

Delphine lost no time in flying to her husband's rescue. He, so the story goes, fearing that violence was intended towards him, and that all trace of him, the editor of the "Presse," would be lost to posterity, filled his pockets with fragments of his journal, and these he scattered from the windows of the conveyance in which he was conducted all along the road, from the Rue Montmartre, where his office was—to the *conciergerie*.

M. de Girardin, not being at the head of affairs himself, had predicted that there would be no less than eighteen governments in twelve months. And, certainly, as his wife observes, on the 30th June,

1848, there had been no less than four governments in four months.

Immediately that the barricades were erected in Paris, M. de Girardin had taken up his abode at his newspaper office. At last, one Saturday morning, his wife wrote to him to tell him that during the preceding night the mob had fired upon the sentinel at the barracks next to their house at Chaillot, where he had left her; and in this letter she proceeded to ask him whether, in case of the insurgents bursting into the house, there might not be some particular object cherished by him, or some papers valuable to him, which he would desire her to rescue or to preserve for him. His answer was:

"No, I have nothing to save and nothing to conceal.

"If the barracks be taken and the mob

desire to enter the house, the only thing for thee to do is to throw open the folding-doors wide, and to be affectionately polite. Of all modes of resistance this is the best. In no place wouldst thou be in greater safety than that in which thou now art; and, besides, it is better that we should be each at our post; thou at home, and I here. I shall dine I know not where; do not expect me this evening. Paris is in a state of siege! The *National* reigns and does not govern. I embrace thee."

"The tenth muse," the queen of society, whose genius and beauty the world had worshipped, was thus left at a time of danger exposed to ruffianly intrusion and brutal insult. His enemies, still writhing, perhaps, from his lashing leaders, blamed her husband for this, but she exonerated him from such blame, for when a few days

afterwards she received the note telling her of his arrest, and laying claim to her help as his wife, what did she do?

She flew to General Cavaignac, forced her way through danger and difficulty into his presence, and eloquently pleaded her husband's cause before him. She succoured her husband by womanly care and by sympathy whilst he remained under arrest. By her influence and exertions she helped to set him at liberty; and by her pen (as the "Vicomte de Launay") she espoused his cause politically. And yet, for days before she received the note which informed her of her husband's arrest, she involuntarily confesses:

"I was very vexed not to have seen M. de Girardin. Nevertheless, I was always hoping to go and see him the next day; but I felt myself so ill and so languid,

that it was impossible for me to venture a distance. . . . I was half dead and I could not walk. . . ."

Comparing the conflicting contemporary accounts of M. Émile de Girardin's position at this time, it does not seem possible for any but his worst political enemies to impute to his conduct the charge of domestic neglect. His wife's political ambition for him would alone have prevented her murmuring at his devotion to the cause by which she had at one time expected to see him rise to ministerial honour. Her vexation seems to have been because illness kept her from him during days of mutual anxiety, which might result in the realization of a mutual hope, by which she, with the enthusiasm of a female politician, (who, in heart, had never ceased to be a poetess) beheld herself, in imagin-

ation, endowed with fresh power to benefit the people. Upon her sentiments at this time let M. de Lamartine presently decide.

Meanwhile, on the 3rd September, 1848, she writes :

"There are two parties which dispute France at this moment. . . .

"The party of those who desire to keep everything. The party of those who desire to take everything.

"The egotistical party.

"The envious party. . . .

"The one has a favourite word, which denotes all its thought,—

"*Fusiller! Fusiller!*

"The other has also its favourite word, which unveils all its system,—

"*Guillotiner! Guillotiner!*

"Fusiller! Guillotiner! Never!

"Go, sons of Cain, dispute the blood-

stained earth between you, but exact not that the children of Abel blend themselves in your hideous combats; leave us to carry up the holy mountain the purified incense which would be defiled beneath your feet, the sacred fire which would be extinguished by the breath of your hatreds; or, if our too clear-sighted looks exasperate you in your mutual iniquities, raise your fratricidal weapon against us, we will await it without flinching; our choice is made: we prefer rather to be your victims than to be your accomplices. Strike without remorse; falling we will bless you, jealous brothers. It is sublime to die for having displeased the wicked; it is sublime to die for having been pleasing to God!

"And what? In this glorious France, in this land of devotion, in this cradle of chivalry, blood flows. . . . Blood flows in

large waves. . . . And that not for the defence of threatened nationality,

"Nor of religion profaned,

"Nor of liberty violated,

"Nor of truth strangled.

"No! It is for none of these noble mottoes of the philosopher, of the thinker, of the hero. . . . It is for the base motto of a notary, of an attorney, of a bailiff's follower; blood flows to-day in this valiant country of France, for the attack and for the defence of *property*.

"Shame to the century! Shame to the people! Shame to the country which sees generous blood flow for such a cause! . . .

"Go, poor workman of Paris; believe us there is a hundred times more grandeur and poetry in the proud simplicity of thy garret than in the citizen's sham comfort. And thou, ungrateful peasant, deserter of

thine own village, instead of envying this rotten Parisian luxury, recall to mind the poor but dignified cottage of thy mother. . . . The citizen of Paris has all the inconveniences of the capital, but he has none of its regal splendours; he has all the vexations, all the tortures of social education, but he has none of the exquisite enjoyments of social life: he has etiquette! Etiquette, that convention of weariness; but he has not elegance! Elegance! that poetry of social life, which causes all the restraints of civilization to be not only bearable, but cherished. The citizen's work is dull, inanimate; but thou at thy work, in the fields, thou canst sing, thou canst dream. But he, how can *he* sing or dream? He is always calculating.

"But think not that in telling thee that the aristocracy are more enviable than the

citizen, that therefore we advise thee to plunder their hotels and to massacre them. . . . The real pleasures of the rich are not in houses, they are in hearts, in intelligence, in appreciation of beautiful things. . . . In short, when a great man has filled the world with his success, when he has been nourished by praise, when he has been intoxicated by the applause of the crowd, wouldst thou know that which really delights him? . . . It is to be loved as one unknown; it is to conceal his glory in the shade, and beneath his hand to feel his heart beat at the sound of a name mysteriously cherished by him.

"Paris workmen! *Bonnet Rouge.* Such are the pleasures of great men, of great minds. Seek those pleasures for yourselves, O People! Then wilt thou cease to envy the dull joys of petty tradesmen in

Paris. To console thyself for not having lamps of alabaster, and chandeliers glittering with glass and gold, look up at the splendour of the stars! To console thyself for not having the engravings of Morin and Destouches, contemplate the Holy Family by Raphaël, which belongs to thee!

"At Paris, where the combat is now raging, it is but for a miserable quarrel about housekeeping. . . . Shall blood still flow for the sake of mahogany? It is not a cause to defend with honour and blood; it is a difference to settle by arithmetic.

"Let our economists, our men of law, solve this problem; and no longer let men of heart, men of ideas, men of the sword, lavish their blood, their talent, their courage, for this base motto of property.

"As to ourself, personally, we shall never become impassioned for such a cause.

The little we possess, we have acquired by work. Let that little be taken! What matters it? We shall either die, and no longer have need of it; or we shall live, and work will restore it to us. . . ."

To the last did Madame de Girardin, who wrote thus, work. Her precept was supported by her practice. Her life was consecrated to others, and that, alas! as says George Sand, at the cost of her own life in this world.

"A short time before the revolution of 1848," says Lamartine, "Madame de Girardin came to pass the end of the summer in my solitude amongst the heaths of Saint-Point. It was then that, with a *verve virile*, she wrote her fine tragedy of 'Cléopâtre,' the style of which has the solidity and polish of marble. I shall never forget the inspiration of her face

and the emotion of her voice, when one day she read to us what she had composed during the night. It was morning; we sat beneath the shade of a mossy roof, looking towards a sloping orchard, from which the view extends over a delicious valley, bounded by gloomy mountains; the silence was unbroken, save by the murmur of the stream beneath the willows, by the humming of bees in the trefoil, and by the warbling of birds in the trees. Delphine's beautiful verses seemed to hush all these noises from without; the very bees ceased to hum; and, from her face, framed in honeysuckle and virgin vine, there emanated even still more poetry than from her verses. These were her last days of calm, as they were mine. Some months afterwards we were in the open street, endeavouring to excite and to sus-

tain public reason, and to promote the salvation of a nation, after the shipwreck of government.

"Madame de Girardin was too Roman at heart not to accept of the Republic. . . . The Republic had an echo of antiquity. The Republic, in her eyes, was the poetry of events. . . . She had never attached herself to the government of July. That *régime* was essentially prosaic. Her instincts, had she only listened to instinct, might have been in favour of the Restoration. . . . She had been beautiful, beloved, happy, flattered, under the government of its finest days. She felt, however, not only the impossibility of their crowning Henri V., but the possibility of crowning the people. . . . All Madame de Girardin's opinions were based on a sense of the beautiful. . . . Nothing in her eyes could

be more beautiful than a Pericles government in France,—a government attempted without crime after the spontaneous fall of a throne which had neither tradition nor principle to sustain it. . . . Therefore she interested herself in this dawning Republic, as it arose from a ruin for which it was not responsible."

Madame de Girardin showed masculine courage during the sudden vicissitudes of this revolution. Her husband, who with impunity had attacked the first government of the republic, was imprisoned by the second. The wife was sublime in anguish, in tenderness, in entreaty, in threats, in eloquence, in claiming either his liberty or the right to share his dungeon with him. The government of the day was guilty of error and roughness, but not of ill-usage, and it yielded to her tears.

"The Republic in its last expiring convulsions found Madame de Girardin neither less resolute nor less constant. Its shocks had shaken her life, but not her soul. . . . Madame Roland would not have better known how to die, either for her honour as a wife, or for her honour as a poetess.

"To date from this time, she closed her heart against illusions, and her door against the world. She no longer worked for glory, but from necessity. . . . One of those grand dramas of character was being woven by her penetrating and observing intellect. To achieve this she studied Balzac, that inexhaustible Molière of romance. Her *salon*, formerly so thronged, was now but the workshop of a great artiste. One found her almost always alone, the pen in her hand; her face was now too pale, when not flushed by the fire

of composition. But she was ever ready to converse, and that with an easy wit, which caused her conversation to be one of the most fascinating of her talents. . . . Those who saw her as I did in these latter days, were struck with the solemn, majestic, and serene character which her more mature beauty had contracted. She wept for children which she had never had. She would have been a grand mother for a son, for the predominant trait in her character was heroism."

Madame de Girardin did not many years survive the Revolution of 1848. In 1855, George Sand went one day to see her at Chaillot. Lamartine went also, but he did not arrive until George Sand alone had enjoyed Delphine's conversation for an hour.

The author of "Lélia" turns aside for a moment to give place to Lamartine, and

" whilst George smokes her cigarette, and watches its spiral fumes, motionless and dreamy as a sphinx," he,—one of whose odes was formerly declared by Châteaubriand to be worthy his own whole "Genius of Christianity," — gently approaches the couch, where, covered with a soft network of red and white wool, the "tenth Muse" has more the air of a convalescent than a dying woman. Can this be death? The season out of doors is cold, but the air is admitted through a large glass door, opening into an enclosure, in the centre of which stands a marble fountain; and sonorous, sweet, but monotonous, is the sound of its waters. Inside the room, the voice of the once-renowned improvisatrice of France is soft and subdued, as she welcomes her beloved brother-poet; but it is he, who, listening, declares that

her conversation in these last moments is still "*souriante, legère, affectueuse*," significant, indeed, of those soothing movements of the heart and mind, which, in the last hours of mortality, sometimes "rock the soul in this second cradle of death."

An atmosphere of peace surrounds her, for, as explains Lamartine, she has never offended but one man in her life, and that was in defence of her husband. "But the righteous indignation of love," asks he, "is it a virtue, or a vengeance in the heart of a wife?"

In the midst of political strife, Madame de Girardin has fought as the "Vicomte de Launay," in defence of high principles; but, however, bright are the weapons, and however unsullied the shield, which served her in this goodly combat, they are, as observes her Christian brother

poet, less suitable as insignia on her tomb as poetess than the true motto of her life—the motto without which no poem of woman's mission is perfect,—the motto which resolves itself into three verbs,—"To please, to love, to pardon."

But George Sand, having smoked out her cigarette, comes forward, and thus declares: "I have never seen her so beautiful and so animated as now! She was always patient, though suffering; but in this last interview, it seems to me that that loveliness of soul and body has never been enough appreciated; she has, perhaps, been never before so complete as now. Her form, her face, her hands, have, by a strange effect of the malady which is inwardly destroying her, lost all trace of years. She is slender, she is pale; Time, so to speak, has

no longer any power over her. It is not the rosy freshness of youth, but it is the transparent whiteness, and the clear and pure aspect of immortality. It is the most beautiful and the most lasting remembrance of herself that she can possibly leave in the soul of her friends.

"It may be said that she feels that it is so, and that she desires that her heart and her mind should be in harmony with this etherealised, or ideal appearance, for never before me has she soared into spheres so high as she does now; though even while she soars she does not lose that frank simplicity which has always characterised her, and which is in singular contrast to her ardent intellect, and to her exuberant wit.

"All," says she to me, "is mystery

and miracle in the fact of life and death. I feel myself well with God. . . .

George Sand turns to look once more on Delphine de Girardin.

It is for the last time in this world.*

* Henceforth, Madame Sand has done with politics. Château Nohant, the cradle of her childhood, is notorious, not only for the literary fame of its illustrious owner, but for the hospitality and benevolence which reign there. Even less to be reverenced for genius is Madame Sand than for charity; her heart is open to the sufferings of the poor; her ear is ready to hear tales of grief; her tongue is eloquent in consolation; her hand is one of healing.

One day, for example, an old woman, covered with a horrible sort of leprosy, presented herself before the Châtelaine, and craved her help. Madame Sand advanced towards her.

"Stay, my good lady, stay," said the old woman, drawing back. "Look at the state I am in."

Madame Sand did not shrink back; but, conducting the afflicted creature into an inner room, she there with her own hands, dressed her wounds, and,

How can the dying improvisatrice be better left than hand in hand with Lamartine?

His dream of political glory is over.

Delphine's also.

Now is he altogether poet again. And she, poetess.

But in his hand has long ago been placed the crucifix, and in his heart are

as a sister of charity, ministered to her until she was healed.

Her son, Maurice, is still Madame Sand's friend, her companion. In the smiles of another generation may she find a solace for past tears!

"But," says she, "I am not of those who think that things resolve themselves in this world. They do, perhaps, but begin here. Certainly, they do not end here .... The eternal doctrines of believers, the good God, the soul immortal, and the hopes of the other life, these in me have resisted and survived all scrutiny, all discussion, and even all intervals of doubt and of despair."

written the words, "There is remembrance; there is hope."

And Honoré de Balzac! Where is he at this time? In his grave, at Père Lachaise.

In August, 1850, not long after Balzac had brought home his bride, he died suddenly. Of heart disease? Of liver complaint? Or, both? What matters it? These, if they existed at all, were but secondary causes of death. The fatal reality in this, as in many other catastrophes, seems to be involved in the words, "Too late!"

Balzac's early dream was fulfilled; he was loved, he was celebrated, his debts were paid. But, too long had he been unappreciated; too long had he worked too hard; too long had he been a prey to anxiety. Too long had a sensitive na-

ture been overstrung. It snapped. Balzac died, it would seem, of happiness, of happiness, which came *too late*.

Théophile Gautier called one day to see Balzac at that new home in the Champs Elysées, which, with exquisite taste and care, he had prepared for the reception of his bride.

Balzac was out.

Théophile Gautier was on the eve of a journey to Italy, for art and artists were out of place in France at this time. The name of liberty had deceived them.

It was Gautier, who under the Republic had, by request, composed some verses to be recited at the Comédie Française on the anniversary of the birth of Corneille.

In these verses he deplored that the

memory of Louis XIV., should be sullied by that of "*Corneille sans souliers*, *Molière sans tombeau*;" and now, in 1850, the poet was warned by the Minister of the Interior that in the slur involved in his stanzas, he had attacked *authority*.

To return.

Balzac was out. The poet, Gautier, did not see him.

In this life, nevermore!

Gautier set forth on his journey. A letter followed him. He opened it, and read: "I can no longer read, nor write. BALZAC."

Many were the legislators who laid claim to the throne of the moral world about the time of Balzac's death. Blood had flowed. Dreams were dispelled. All the elements of force and of activity were still marching in disorder.

But political rivalries were for a moment hushed one day in early autumn when through the streets of Paris passed the funeral of Honoré de Balzac. A crowd followed the hearse—an illustrious crowd—for all then still in France whose names are celebrated in art and in literature, accompanied Balzac to the grave. A mixed crowd, emblematic of his writings, also mourned; "*Le Maître est mort.*"

When Balzac more than twenty years before, was struggling, as we have seen, against poverty, and was then wont to emerge from his obscure lodgings to mingle with the people, as one of them, hungry, and but scantily clothed, a favourite, though rare recreation of his—so Gautier says,—was to wander through Paris until he reached Père Lachaise. From that

sanctuary, that last earthly resting-place of human passion, and human want, and human strife, Balzac, like a young eagle, would gaze down upon the roofs of the great metropolis of what is called modern civilisation, upon that ocean of slates and tiles which covers so much luxury, misery, intrigue, crime, and unsuspected virtue. Then, turning to the tombs, "See what fine epitaphs are here!" would he say: "Behold the eloquence of single names!" And he would fall into a reverie over one such name as Molière.

And now this world's dreams are over for Balzac. Was his boasted Reality unreal after all? Has he only now found out what Reality is? We may not here pause for reflections such as this.

So, onward! Through the great city the funeral of Balzac passes; through the

streets in which years since he had roamed, and where he had identified himself with the poor, making their needs his own.

Onward the funeral goes; up to Père Lachaise, where the grave is open to receive him, and where his brother authors lie sleeping.

But one of these whose rest has not come yet—Victor Hugo—beholding from afar his contemporary's tomb (on which is simply inscribed "BALZAC") declares: "All his books make but one book—a book living, luminous, profound, in which going, coming, walking, moving, real but terrible, is the whole of our contemporary civilisation. A wonderful book! Called by its author 'Comédie,' but which he might rather have called History. A book which takes all forms, all styles; which, passing beyond Tacitus reaches unto

Suetonius; which, surpassing Beaumarchais, reaches unto Rabelais. A book which lavishly displays the true, the secret, the *bourgeois*, the trivial, the material, and which at some moments suddenly reveals athwart all reality wrenched widely open, the most gloomy and the most tragic ideality. Bodily did Balzac seize modern society. From all things he plucks out something; from some, illusions; from others, hope; he rakes up vice; he dissects passion; he digs into the depths of man; he penetrates into the soul, the heart, the tenderness, the brain, the abyss which each man has in himself."

Rather than smile at the enthusiasm of this panegyric, let us admire its noble consistency; for, during the much-tried life of Balzac, he who gave utterance to it had shown his appreciation of that life

"which was more filled with works than with days."

The "Comédie Humaine" was left unfinished by Balzac's hand, but by his death a new scene of it was inaugurated; for, no sooner was he beyond the pale of all human help, than some of his fellow-men who in this life had been his detractors, became rivals in honouring his memory. Now that his heart had ceased to throb in response to mortal praise, he was dubbed "Balzac le Grand;" he was idolized as "the great poet of human passion;" he was revered as "the great philosopher."

Thus, too late, the prediction of his early years was fulfilled: "Je serai en mesure d'affirmer que le dix-neuvième siècle m'appartient." Alas, that this prediction should be accomplished, not by force of origi-

nality, nor earnestness, nor concentrated work, but by the gross facility of coarse copyists, and by the infection which taints the atmosphere of corrupt materialism.

"Pastiche!" as formerly cried out the disgusted Delatouche,—"Pastiche! Be Balzac if thou canst!" And, oh, how much too easy for Paris Arabs to be Balzac.

To be Balzac, that *bon diable* in debt, at war with duns and destiny? Yes. To be Balzac, the man who worked; to be Balzac, the genius soaring to sublimity? No.

And Balzac, *sans génie*, reminds one of that guano *sans oiseaux*, which was too ludicrously horrible for even his sense of reality, when, at the Jardies, he was brought down to its level by his democrat guest there—Victor Hugo.

At the Jardies we have heard Balzac's laugh as he echoed those words "*sans oiseaux ;*" and here it is only just to him, to say, that he intended that property of the Jardies as a gift to his mother (his father died by an accident), when he could afford to instal her in it. In her behalf, therefore, it is possible that Balzac, who, though Realist, revelled in hyperbole, did seriously meditate the practicability of some of those vast schemes of pecuniary profit to be derived from the Jardies, on which he was wont to expatiate, to the special delight of his disciple, Léon Gozlan.*

* Léon Gozlan, by whom and to whom the reader of these volumes has been introduced at the Jardies, took no part in the revolutionary movement of 1848, save that of dining at the Tuileries with Citizen (Governor) Fournier St. Amant, and at the Luxembourg, on the eve of Louis Blanc's departure thence. Whether owing to the revolutionary *cuisine* or not,

But all things in this world are mutable; and, not long ago, the author of these pages, looking on the outside of the Jardies, was told by a compatriot of Balzac, that that property had passed into the hands of a man of money. Hard to believe are these changes (even in the ownership of bricks and mortar), which mortality entails, when looking up at this whilome abode of Balzac. There, upon the steep acclivity it still stands exposed to the sun's hot rays as when accompanied by

Léon Gozlan subsequently was attacked with cholera; and, afterwards needing change of air, he went to Brussels. There he so far recovered his constitution that he startled Belgian nerves by the strength with with which, in public, he called out "*Vive le Roi!*" as deputed to do by his *confrère*, Laurent Jan, who once upon a time, as we have seen, Balzac had desired to associate with himself and Gozlan in a journey to the Great Mogul. Gozlan's fame had preceded him to Brussels, where he was one day much attracted

Léon Gozlan, Balzac stepped forth from it to welcome Victor Hugo.

There still gleam the green shutters upon the outer walls of that abode, "moitié cottage, moitié chalet,"—as though Balzac had only just pushed them open after a hard night's work, eager to inhale the morning air; or, folded to, as though he still were peering with his bright eyes through them in expectation of the bodily

by the portrait of a youth, with cherry cheeks and golden locks. Léon entered the shop, in the window of which, among some questionable-looking French books, this portrait was displayed.

"Of whom?" asked he, pointing towards the picture.

"Léon Gozlan!" answered the vendor.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Gozlan, lifting up his hat, and displaying not only his dark bronze face, but his jet-black hair. "Look at my head, sir," he continued, addressing the astonished picture-seller; "Look at my head, sir, and know that I permit you to counterfeit my books, but not my hair."

approach of those debts of his; which, whilst still unpaid, were honoured by a share of his celebrity.

The outlines with which Balzac in chalk, or charcoal, transcended the *beaux Arts*, can never, however, be erased, or superseded, by even the combined strength of a man of money and a Paris upholsterer. At the Jardies, Balzac read the first copy of his "Mercadet," that "*spéculateur aux abois*," who disputed with distress the last *débris* of his fortune and his credit.

"At the Jardies," says Théophile Gautier, "Balzac read to us 'Mercadet primitif' (the first draft varied in its voluminousness from the piece as afterwards arranged for the Gymnase, and which was of posthumous popularity). Balzac, who had hurt his foot, was reclining on a hard horse-hair sofa, when he read to us 'Mer-

cadet,' . . . he read like Tieck, without indicating either the acts, or the scenes, or the names, but by a particular change of voice he rendered each personage perfectly recognisable; the tones with which he endowed the different species of creditors were indescribably comic, harsh, honeyed, precipitate, drawling, threatening, plaintive. This one squeaked; that one mewed; this one scolded; that one grumbled; and another howled in all inflections possible and impossible. DEBT, chanting at first a solo, was soon sustained by an immense chorus. Creditors crept out from everywhere; from behind the stove, from under the bed, from out of the chest of drawers; they filtrated through the hole of the door-lock; they were vomited through the shank of the stove; some scaled the windows like lovers; others started up from

the bottom of a travelling trunk like those *diables des joujoux* yclept jacks-in-the-box; not a few passed in array against the walls; it was a crowd, a clatter, an invasion, a rising tide. 'Mercadet' in vain essayed to quell it; but as fast as he satisfied some, others always joined the assault; until the very horizon was darkened by swarms upon swarms of creditors arriving in legions to devour their prey. Never did a representation produce such effect as 'Mercadet,' read by Balzac at the Jardies, where all magnificence then existed but in a state of dream . . . Wainscotings of *palissandre;* tapestry from the Gobelins; glasses from Venice; pictures by Raphael. . . . As to Balzac, he believed literally in the gold, and the marble, and the silk; but, if he never finished the Jardies . . . he knew, at least, how to

build himself a monument 'more durable than brass,' an immense city, peopled by his creations, and gilded by the 'rays of his glory.'"

And this by force not only of original genius, but by strength of hard, persistent, consistent, and consecutive Work. Necessity,—the necessity of paying off these tremendous debts (how first contracted we have already seen),—Necessity, that Nemesis of real life, stood by Balzac night and day; and with whip and scourge, urged on this romancier to do what he did do. Thus urged and impelled, Balzac's life, as says Victor Hugo, was more full of works than of days; but his artistic conscience was invulnerable, his artistic self-criticism was even a torment to himself and to others. Walking sometimes through the night, as we have seen from Versailles to Paris, he would

dream of a plot; then, by way of seizing hold of that plot as a reality, he would at early morning hasten home (without a hat on his head, or a sou in his pocket, but favoured by a benevolent *'bus*) to make it tangible in forty pages of manuscript; these he would send by his faithful man Friday (otherwise François) to the printer's at — say — a distance of three leagues, bidding him fly like Mercury, and be back with proof instantly. François revered his master as a superhuman genius who abjured tobacco-smoke and all stimulant but the coffee which he had placed at his side; and by a low bow would he tacitly declare, as formerly did Marie Antoinette's favourite financier, "If possible, your commands are obeyed; if impossible they shall be obeyed." The proof would arrive — in form of an im-

mense map — *i.e.* with vast margins around it for additions, corrections, ramifications, emendations, &c., &c. Then would that original proof become more like some specimens of modern spirit-writing, than anything ever seen or heard of in humanly authentic authorship; upwards, downwards, sideways, crossways, roundways, and in handwriting almost undecipherable, Balzac would — spider-like — irradiate from his original centre of thought; so that subordinates in the chief printing-houses of Paris, would stipulate when making fresh engagements that there should not be more than "two hours a-day of Balzac." By corrections and additions, which were incalculably multiplied throughout innumerable revises until the whole work was complete, did Balzac fearfully reduce his profits; al-

though, since his death, some of his proofs and revises have been sold for enormous sums. And as before said, if not satisfied with himself in some minute descriptive point, he would set off, heedless of cost or inconvenience, on distant journeys to verify to himself his own veracity.

When as journalist he thought to repair his literary losses, his liberality to his contributors helped them to achieve fame at his expense. So, unaided in the onset of life, and with the tide of private, pecuniary, and political circumstance against him; ardent, unappreciated, unsubdued, but inevitably in debt from want of timely help in his first start in the world; of exhaustive earnestness, of eccentric enthusiasm of crude conscientiousness, of impulsive *mobilité;* of heedless generosity; working to excess; hospitable in poverty; realist

at an erratic cost; who can wonder that Balzac's life on earth was one of Sisyphus-like toil, and that he therefore died just when — that toil ended — he desired to live!

Then, when he was beyond all reach of human praise or blame, his life-long enemies shouted "Vive le grand Balzac!" Nay, one of them (who though of great renown shall here be nameless) even sought permission to increase his own popularity by erecting a monument to Balzac's memory. But, no; this was the privilege, by sole and sacred right, of the one beloved, for whose reception Balzac's last home on earth had been by him so carefully prepared.

And for his friend, and not his enemy on earth, it was reserved to pronounce his eulogy, already quoted; but, perhaps,

the most eloquent epitaph does sometimes consist in one single word. So, at least, it once was said at Père Lachaise of *Molière* by

"BALZAC."

THE END.

London: Printed by STRANGEWAYS & WALDEN, Castle St. Leicester Sq.


00064918

Digitized with financial assistance from
Government of Maharashtra
on 30 January, 2020